

WINCHBURGH ACADEMY

CURRICULUM RATIONALE



Information for Staff, Pupils and Parents

Overview

Winchburgh Academy is a non-denominational secondary school in West Lothian, opening in August 2022, with modern and innovative teaching areas and spaces incorporating both indoor and outdoor learning facilities. The school is situated in a development of 3 new schools (Winchburgh Academy, Sinclair Academy and Holy Family Primary School) with a shared sports HUB. The school has been built as a 'School in the Park', with direct access via the school grounds into Auldcathie Park to the North, with a rich and versatile range of outdoor learning opportunities available on our doorstep. The school currently has one catchment school, Winchburgh Primary, with a second feeder Primary due to open in August 2025. The school role in year one will be approximately 55 first year students, and the building has a capacity of approximately 660 students, which it is predicted to reach within 10 years.

Winchburgh is a rapidly changing town, with significant investment in new house building and infrastructure changing the demographic of the population. By the time the school reaches its capacity, the impact of this will be that most students are expected to come from SIMD 8-10 households. The town's location in the central belt mean that a broad range of locations are accessible for post-school opportunities, such as Further and Higher Education and employment. There are significant employment opportunities in the local area in the building and construction trade and there is expected to be a growing hospitality sector as the town continues to develop.

Our Curriculum

"The period from S1-S3 has a clear purpose: that all young people will have a strong platform for later learning and for successful transition to qualifications at the right level for them."

(Building the Curriculum 3, page 35)

Our curriculum has been designed taking into account both National and Local guidance, with particular emphasis given to the most recent *OECD* report and the *Ken Muir* report into Scottish Education. Our planning has been informed by the *National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence* and *Getting It Right for Every Child* documentation. Another key influence in our curriculum planning for the current session has been our unique circumstances of opening and establishing a new school.

Our curriculum has been designed in consultation with members of our school community, and in partnership with staff from Education Scotland. These partners, in conjunction with Our Academy staff, and the chair of our Employer Partnership group will form our Curriculum Design HUB, who will provide support and challenge as we further develop our curriculum within Winchburgh Academy.

In First Year our curriculum aims to build, in a coherent manner, on students' experiences in Primary School through learning opportunities that are relevant, interesting and motivating, allowing our students to develop their knowledge, skills and interests further.

In the BGE, our aim is to enable each student to:

- Experience learning across all curricular areas
- Develop their Literacy and Numeracy levels, with opportunities to develop these across a range of learning contexts
- Develop and maintain positive mental and physical wellbeing
- Develop the skills referenced in Meta-Skills 4.0
- Provide opportunities for personal achievement
- Experience opportunities for personal development and achievement within the classroom and beyond, through the wider life of the school
- Experience challenge and success across their learning
- Develop their employability skills through working with external partners and businesses
- Bring together learning from a range of different contexts in the form of inter-disciplinary projects

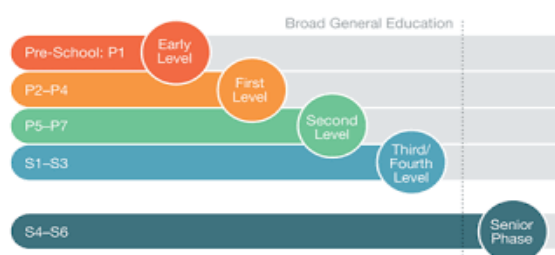
Our curriculum has been designed with a strong focus on supporting our students' health and wellbeing. Central to this objective are our extended learning periods within the timetable. The objective of these being:

- Reducing the number of transitions in each school day and the time spent on these
- Providing more time for pupils and staff to develop positive relationships
- Students having less subjects/classes to plan, prepare and undertake each day, promoting positive wellbeing
- Time for students to participate in collaborative and deeper learning experiences

All students are supported via our universal support provision. They have daily contact with a consistent adult via their Pupil Support Registration (PSR) teacher, a weekly Health & Wellbeing period, access to our school counsellor, and dedicated Health and Wellbeing conferences within our flexible learning time.

Our BGE curriculum incorporates the key principles of curriculum design, specifically: Challenge and Enjoyment; Progression; Coherence; Breadth; Depth; Relevance; and Personalisation and Choice.

Pupils will work at the level appropriate to each individual (primarily third level) based on previous experience in Primary School and then the learning undertaken in Our Academy. The majority of students should be experiencing achievement within Level 4 by the end of the BGE in preparation for National Qualifications in the Senior Phase.



We know through interpretation of local labour market intelligence that we require to support young people through our curriculum to thrive in the following sectors (forecast for 2024-31).

Figure 12: Forecast Employment Change by Occupation (2024-2031), West Lothian



With this in mind, the rationale for our curriculum is based on developing the skills, knowledge and attributes that will enable them to contribute successfully to the local community, context and labour market.

Fridays

Our timetable on a Friday has 2 extended learning periods. The first of these is our flexible learning time. Over the course of this year, this time will be used for the following (in addition to retaining the flexibility to change as necessary to meet our current needs):

- IDL initiatives
- Health & Wellbeing conferences
- Inter-faith conferences
- Inter-school events
- School House events
- Community partnership events
- Business partnership/Employability/DYW events
- Immersive learning opportunities

The second learning period on a Friday is for our 'School of Choice' (My Academy) programme, where the students have the opportunity for personalisation and choice within their timetable. Pupils choose an elective to study for the duration of S1 in an area of interest. The Schools of Choice programme has a particular focus on employability skills and accreditation within the learning undertaken.

Knowing Our Learners

Our teaching and learning within different subjects is tailored to meet the needs of our learners in each class. Through a comprehensive transition programme and detailed pupil information guides for staff, we know our children and their needs very well. This knowledge allows staff to make well-informed decisions around the next steps in learning for our students, and to plan learning that meets the needs of all. Our Teaching, Learning and Assessment Toolkit ([hyperlink](#)) provides the framework for staff to deliver lessons that meet our expectations as a school and effectively prepares students within the BGE with the knowledge, skills and attributes to be successful in the Senior Phase and beyond.

Time Allocations - S1 Curriculum

As per the time allocation illustrated below, our curriculum in S1 covers each of the key curricular areas with an emphasis on Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing and an appropriate balance between Practical and Non-Practical subjects. Additional elements of the curriculum will be incorporated into the flexible learning times on a Friday morning, to ensure students receive their full entitlement across the academic year.

