

THE STOWE CURRICULUM

ISI Framework:
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Our aim is to deliver a curriculum which enables us to fulfil our commitment to Stoics as stated in the school aims. This will ensure that all Stoics:

- are provided with both an intellectual challenge and a sense of achievement
- develop knowledge, understanding and skills in a manner which encourages their confidence and gives satisfaction and enjoyment
- does not discriminate against pupils or promote partisan political views
- are given appropriate opportunities to develop their independent thinking and learning skills
- acquire the knowledge, attitudes and learning skills which will facilitate further study
- have the opportunity for enrichment and subject-based support through provision of a range of additional activities including departmental societies and field trips.

In addition, we offer a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities designed to give Stoics the chance to develop further many of the skills which enhance their performance in the taught curriculum.

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We recognise that to facilitate these aims, each student is entitled to a curriculum characterised by the qualities listed below. Our Curriculum Policy, outlined below, takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan. It does not discriminate against pupils or promote partisan political views. Furthermore, it does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Indeed, at Stowe we celebrate and promote such values.

All Stoics in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Form are in lessons from 8:45am to 3:00pm Monday through Friday, and from 8:45 to 12:05pm on Saturdays. Sixth Form Stoics are in lessons from 8:45am to 3:00pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 8:45 to 1:05pm on Thursdays and from 8:45am to 12:05pm on Saturdays. There is a whole school assembly on Mondays from 8:15 to 8:40am and occasional year group assemblies on other days from 8:15 to 8:40am. There are tutorial meetings on Wednesdays for all year groups from 8:15 to 8:40am, as well as tutorial meetings for the Lower School on Fridays 8:15-8:40am, and the Lower School have a Tutorial Lesson on Thursdays in period 5 (2:05-3:00pm). PSHE is delivered to the Lower School in lessons. There is whole-school Chapel on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:15 to 8:40am and a whole school Chapel on Fridays from 5:30-6:30pm. Pupils are in school for 214 days of the year including Sundays.

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We will provide a curriculum appropriate to the needs of students at different stages of their learning. We will take into account their age, aptitude and needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling them to contribute with confidence within both the school community and the outside world.

We present a broad and balanced curriculum which incorporates these elements of learning:

- the development of knowledge
- the understanding of concepts
- the acquisition of thinking, speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills
- the ability to apply these elements in a variety of circumstances
- the development of metacognition

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Through the curriculum, we give access to the following areas of experience – aesthetic and creative, human and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral and spiritual, physical, technological and scientific.

We structure the curriculum in such a way as to allow for effective continuity and development through planned co-ordination of key aspects within each area of study. Progress follows both specification content and assessment.

The GCSE Curriculum (Years 9, 10 & 11)

Stoics make four choices to supplement the Core Curriculum of Maths, English and Science and build a programme leading to between eight and nine GCSEs. Work more challenging than conventional GCSE requirements is made available in classes wherever possible, but also through societies and activities such as Lower School Academic Scholars, the Open Minds Programme and Debating. There are also a range of departmental societies offering subject-specific extension.

Common Core: English Language and Literature; Mathematics and Sciences (either Dual Award or Triple Award if chosen as an option). All Stoics are also required to choose at least one Modern Foreign Language (unless English is their second language).

Curriculum/Skills Support lessons are available to those students who are deemed by the SENDCo to need this support.

EAL is available by arrangement with the Additional Needs Department

Classical Greek is available within the curriculum by arrangement.

All pupils have one period a week of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) delivered in one lesson per week. In addition, all Third and Fourth Form pupils have a Tutorial Lesson once per week that focuses on reflecting on progress in their six 'Change Maker Skills': Active Learning, Communication & Technology, Emotional Intelligence, Analytical Thinking, Creativity & Innovation, Leadership & Social Literacy.

Some subjects offer tiered entry by papers of graded difficulty, targeting a restricted range of grades. In these subjects, decisions about the tier level at which a candidate will be entered will be delayed for as long as possible to allow for academic improvement.

Pupils are expected to continue with all of their GCSE subjects through to examination, unless the School has determined a specific need that would require more time to be made available

for extra support instead of a GCSE.

Sixth Form Curriculum (Years 12 & 13)

For external joiners into the Sixth Form, the requirement is at least six GCSE passes at Grade 6 or above. All pupils they must choose subjects for which they have achieved the required foundation grade at GCSE, or have displayed the equivalent level through other assessment means if they did not take GCSEs. Stoics take three or four subjects from the start of Year 12. For those students taking three A Levels or BTECs, it is expected that the pupil will also take up an EPQ or another elective. The School requires Stoics to achieve a minimum of three pass (E and above) grades on the internal end of year exams for automatic progression to Year 13. Advice on choices and combinations is given through the Head of Sixth, Sixth Form Tutors and the Head of Futures and Careers Advisor and the foundation GCSE grades required for each subject that are published in the Courses Guide.

Entry Assessment and Outline Curriculum

All Stoics are assessed on entry by Common Entrance or PSB marks, ISEB Pre-Testing or Stowe Entry papers. Pupils will be in mixed attainment sets in the first term of the Third Form, with the exception of two 'Science Stretch' sets designed to ensure those well ahead in Maths and Sciences continue to be challenged and make swift progress. In addition, the Third Form (Year 9) and the Lower Sixth (Year 12) sit the CAT4 tests early in the first few weeks of the year as a more objective test of their current cognitive abilities. The data from these tests will be made available to departments during the first term and can be used to aid GCSE setting in January.

Pupils entering Stowe at age 13 are placed in the **Third Form**, where the curriculum in the Michaelmas Term seeks to excite the pupils' interest in the different subjects available and where necessary to consolidate and complete the work done at previous schools. This is to help prepare pupils to choose and begin (in January) their GCSE subjects, as well as to develop study skills, work habits and academic enthusiasm. Third Formers are taught 17 or 18 different subjects, normally by as many different specialist teachers. There are nine Forms: W, MW, N, S, T; D, CM, Re and Ro. During this introductory term all pupils take **two** languages (from French, German, Spanish, or Latin). In special circumstances, pupils may be given extra Skills support instead of one of the two languages. Those wishing to take three languages can do so using an extra lesson on Mondays at 5:30pm Stretch and challenge is made available to all Lower School students through subject departments and also through the Open Minds programme, and the various academic departmental societies. High attaining Lower School students are further offered stretch and challenge through the Lower School Academic Scholars group (LSAS).

From January of the Third Form all departments will set pupils according to assessments of each pupil's academic attributes and character. Stoics' requirements for extra support are assessed initially through entrance exam English marks and also through the advice of Tutors or the Additional Needs Department, and pupils are monitored continuously through Academic Progress Grades (APGs) and internal exam performance. All Stoics are assessed for reading, spelling and writing speed in the first half term of the Third Form, so that individual programmes to overcome difficulties can be established.

From January in the **Third Form** and through the **Fourth** and **Fifth Forms** Stoics make four choices to supplement the core curriculum (English Language & Literature, Maths, Dual Award Science) and will build a programme leading to nine GCSEs (occasionally fewer in special circumstances). All Third, Fourth and Fifth formers also have one lesson per week of PSHE and one Tutorial Period.

In the **Sixth Form** Stoics normally begin with three A level or BTEC courses and an EPQ or other Elective in Year 12. If desired, a fourth A Level/BTEC can be chosen instead of an Elective and for the very ambitious it is possible to take four A Levels/BTECs and an EPQ or other Elective. The normal expectation is for pupils to finish with at least three full A Levels or BTECs, plus either an EPQ or another Elective qualification, though there may be exceptions made with the Deputy Head Academic's approval. All sixth-formers have some private study lessons in their timetables, and these may also be used for extra or support courses. Academic extension societies and courses are also available in both the Lower and Upper Schools. It is expected that in the Sixth Form, if not before, Stoics begin to select one particular subject as their specialism for the future and will seek to go beyond the A level syllabus under the guidance of the appropriate teachers/tutors. There are a range of departmental societies that meet regularly to encourage Stoics to extend their learning beyond the taught curriculum. The Lower School Academic Scholars (LSAS) for the Third to Fifth Form and the Senior School Academic Scholars (SSAS) for the Sixth Form both meet weekly and provide additional extension and support for those pupils who are highly talented academically and who in the Sixth Form will be applying to the most competitive university courses.

Differentiation

Through the delivery of our curriculum and in academic departments, we will acknowledge the differences between children, even of the same age, by generating variation in tasks and content so that there is a balance between the need for a challenge and the likelihood of success for each student. The SENDCo runs the Additional Needs Department, which is responsible for assessing all pupil on entry for SEND (including those with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and the Academically Highly Talented (AHT)). All teachers are expected to be aware of any SEND information (including those with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and the Academically Highly Talented (AHT)) relating to specific pupils and to take those needs into account when planning and delivering lessons. The School is committed to ensuring that those pupils with SEND or disabilities are not discriminated against in any way.

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Pupils with Statements and EHCPs

Statements and EHCPs are implemented according to LEA guidelines. Following the annual review, the SENDCo draws up an IEP based on the curriculum. This targets and implements the provision discussed in consultation with all relevant parties. The IEP is published on the iSAMS database and updated as required. These are accessible to all staff. In 2024-25 we have no pupils with a Statement or EHCP.

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Personal, Social and Health Education

All Third, Fourth and Fifth formers have one lesson of 55 minutes per week of PSHE. In the Sixth

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Form a selection of inspiring external speakers are used to encourage students to think further about the subject matter covered in the Lower School and to hear more about real-life experiences. The PSHE course is designed to ensure that all pupils received relationships and sex education and to encourage all pupils to promote respect and a culture of tolerance, awareness and diversity, as well as to prepare pupils for coping with the dangers and stresses of adolescent and adult life.

Recreation and Activities Programme

Stowe run a very broad and busy programme of sport and activities, in which all pupils are expected to take part. This programme is designed and organised by the Directors of Sport, Music, Drama and Cocurricular and they work with the activity leaders and the Group Head of Health & Safety to ensure that every activity has been assessed for potential risks. Pupils are required to take part in some physical activity on a weekly basis, but have a great deal of choice in terms of what they participate in. All Fourth Form pupils choose between participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, the Combined Cadet Force, or the Arts Award Scheme. Other activities and clubs include Debating, Chess, Model United Nations and Crossfire (the School's Christian discussion group), as well as various departmental societies. There is also a programme available for those who wish to be involved with service and volunteering. These activities and societies help to ensure that all pupils develop their emotional, intellectual, social, creative and physical skills.

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Activities take priority Monday to Friday between 3-5pm and there are usually a range of sporting fixtures on Saturdays. Pupils also have unstructured free time in the morning break times, Monday through Saturday from 10:00-10:40am, in the early evening and on the weekends.

Careers and Higher Education Guidance

All Stoics are also given guidance about course choices and life choices through the Futures Department. Careers guidance is balanced and impartial and helps pupils to explore all possibilities for their future. It is delivered in each of the five years and the strong tutorial system is essential to this programme. Pupils' aptitudes are assessed at critical stages and their interests explored through a series of questionnaires and online programmes. High value is placed upon work experience and help is on hand to set this up. In the Sixth Form there is a Stowe HE & Careers Fair giving Stoics the chance to discuss courses and careers with top practitioners across a wide range of fields. Pupils are given detailed and impartial advice through the tutorial system and by the Heads of Year about their course choices, both in the Third Form when they choose their GCSE options and in the Fifth Form when they are making choices for A Levels and BTECs.

Advice on entrance to Higher and sometimes Further Education is given alongside exploration of the benefits of a Gap Year. This becomes a key focus for tutorials with Sixth Form students from the September of the Lower Sixth. Speakers are invited throughout the year to give talks and seminars about different higher education and career opportunities and to provide advice on how best to prepare applications and CVs. An important element of our philosophy is to encourage pupils to develop flexibility in their approach to a future career or careers. The

acquisition of excellent communications skills, both linguistically and through information technology, is emphasised. It is our policy to encourage students to accept this important personal responsibility, to research course possibilities diligently and take appropriate initiatives. We assist the pupils in various ways. First and foremost, we stress the importance of the tutorial role: The Tutor generally has the best overview of a pupil's progress and intellectual style. He or she is ideally positioned to assemble and synthesise information from subject teachers, Houseparents, etc. The Head of Sixth and Head of Futures support this activity and 'sweep up' problems. We also aim to create and encourage contacts between pupils and higher education personnel; for example, through visiting speakers and university Open Days. We strive to constantly update our knowledge of the higher education scene and UCAS applications. Tutors play a prominent role in this. We provide comprehensive information on the School website and Intranet/StoweNet. If a university invites a Stoic for interview, we arrange subject-specific interview practice, and this is provided as a matter of course with staff outside Stowe for Oxbridge candidates. It is our continuous aim to stimulate pupil's awareness of the vital importance of submitting a maturely considered application and to that end there are special briefings of pupils in small groups and as a year group. When a pupil is considering applying to a North American university, we will put him or her in touch with the Careers Advisor, who is also our Coordinator for International Applications, and our resident Harvard Fellow, who will guide them through the application process.

Study and Thinking Skills

These are delivered explicitly through the Change Maker Days, and are also delivered by academic tutors and teachers across all subjects and activities. Engagement in different areas and development of the Change Maker Skills is tracked through the use of OneNote pages and is recognised through The Award, which assigns points for participation, degree of engagement and accomplishment. The Lower School years have a weekly Tutorial Period where they are engaged in working through the Skills Development Framework (SDF), which is overseen by the Learning Skills Trust. The Lower Sixth Form have an additional Study Skills programme provided at certain stages throughout the year, which includes seminars led by internal and external speakers. Individual subjects are responsible for teaching study skills in class, particularly revision skills in the run-up to exams.

Teaching at Stowe

We are committed to providing Stoics with the very best teaching across all subjects and lessons are expected to be well-planned, effective in ensuring pupil progress and provide a good preparation for external examinations. Teaching appointments are made after a rigorous interview process, which includes consideration of subject qualifications and experience, references, a Safeguarding, Prohibition from Teaching and Management and DBS check, a lesson observation, a pupil panel interview, an academic panel interview and a pastoral interview panel, which includes the Head. All teaching staff take part in an annual rolling Performance Review and Professional Development (PRPD) programme, involving observation of their lessons, audits of marked work and lesson planning, and discussions about pedagogy, as well as an evaluation of their wider commitments and any extra roles of responsibility. We also expect all teachers to survey their class sets on at least an annual basis to help encourage dialogue about teaching methods and what pupils find most helpful. All teaching staff are

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expected to commit to continually developing and improving their own practice and a programme of internal CPD is available, as well as funding to allow staff to attend courses and receive further qualifications that will benefit their practice. There is a Head of Teaching & Learning whose role is to help encourage engagement with teacher's professional development and the School hosts an education conference called 'StoweEd' every year. Whilst there is no regulation structure for a Stowe lesson, teachers are expected to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught, design lessons in such a way as to stimulate intellectual excitement, ensure pupil progress, effectively utilise techniques and classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range, and ensure that the standards of expected behaviour are being adhered to. All teachers are expected to adhere to the school Marking Policy and to use continual assessment of pupil progress to inform their planning. All teaching staff must ensure that at no time do they undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and their teaching or actions should not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the 2010 Act.

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Evaluation and Communication of Pupil Performance

All Stoics are regularly assessed according to exam board criteria and these assessments feed into the Attainment grade that forms part of the Academic Progress Grades (APGs) published to the pupils and their parents twice per term. The Attainment grade in the APGs is a trajectory grade for those in the Third, Fourth and Lower Sixth Forms and reflects current performance in the exam years. In addition to the Attainment grade there are grades given by each teacher for Learning Behaviours. In addition to the APGs, teachers provide full reports on pupils' progress at once per year. There is also one parent teacher meeting scheduled per year group per year. Where a student is not felt to be making sufficient progress academically, there is close liaison between the pupil's Tutor, Houseparent and Head of Year. For those students who have been identified as a cause for concern, there is a system of reporting cards and interim reports from teachers between the APGs.

Promoting Positive Pupil Behaviours and Leadership

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In order to help promote good behaviour in lessons and across all aspects of school life, the School publishes Rules, Regulations and Useful information in the termly Blue Book, which is distributed to all pupils and available also to parents. This includes all policies on pupil behaviour, making clear expected standards of conduct and behaviour and laying out systems for rewards and sanctions. There is also clear guidance for pupils as to where to turn and what to do if they see or are experiencing any bullying or harassment.

Pupils are given opportunities to develop and practice leadership across a range of activities and across all year groups. Prefects are appointed in Year 13 and are given specific (and appropriate) duties and responsibilities. In addition, each year group has Year Group Leaders from each House. There are also a range of pupil voice opportunities such as the Academic Pupil Council and the Food Pupil Council, as well as leadership opportunities and training available through activities, sports, clubs and societies.

Information and Communication Technology

The School's ICT goals are to make the most of ICT to enhance the educational delivery in all subjects and also to equip our pupils with the digital skills they will need to flourish beyond their time at Stowe. Every student and member of staff should have access to the ICT facilities they need at the time they need them. They should acquire basic competencies in word, data and image processing, as well as the extended competencies needed in their particular areas of work. Stowe has an extensive computer network that provides network sockets in every classroom, all on-site staff accommodation and for every pupil in house. All Stoics are expected to arrive equipped with a laptop and there is a wireless network in the academic zone and each boarding house. From September 2023 the laptops are being provided by the School on a lease basis to the Third Form so by September 2024 both Third and Fourth Form will be equipped with these. Every classroom has a computer and data projector. There are interactive whiteboards in the majority of classrooms. The Stowe Intranet/VLE is accessible by staff and students anywhere around the school and from outside Stowe via the Internet. Its educational content is contributed to by all subject teachers, not just ICT specialists. The Group Director of ICT and the ICT department works with all departments to support this and delivers INSET courses to help staff acquire the necessary skills. All members of the Stowe community have their own email address and are expected to check it on a daily basis. Email is seen as an essential means of communication and can be accessed by everyone from outside Stowe via the Internet as well as from any computer on the school network. The Lower School are not allowed to have mobile phones during lesson times and until 5:00pm, unless by prior arrangement. All Third and Fourth Form pupils in boarding houses hand their phones in before second prep at 7:30pm and all Fifth Form boarders hand their phones in before bed. The Sixth Form may carry phones in lessons, but these should not be used during lessons for any non-academic purpose.

Development of staff ICT Skills

As professionals, all staff are expected to continually develop their ICT skills. ICT targets are discussed and agreed with Heads of Department through the annual PRPD process and the Group Director of ICT and the ICT department will support and train as necessary. Online ICT skills training material is available to all staff and pupils over the computer network. The School provides laptops or tablets to all teaching staff, with training provided on best practice and uses for teaching.

Acceptable ICT Usage Policies

All staff and pupils are required to sign an acceptable ICT usage policy that clearly states how they should use Stowe's computing facilities. Users should avoid doing anything that may adversely affect the security and smooth running of the network. Passwords should be kept private and should be changed whenever a breach of security is suspected. Disciplinary action will be taken against staff who seriously misuse the school computer network.

iSAMS – Stowe's pupil information database

Stowe uses iSAMS as the database which is used to record information about pupils. The system is used to report absences, pupil achievements and for information on any issues or disciplinary matters, as well as for writing reports. Contact information for parents and

guardians is also recorded there. All academic staff need to use iSAMS on a regular basis, so must ensure they develop the necessary skills to do so. Under the Data Protection Act, staff should not pass on any of the information recorded in iSAMS to anyone outside the school except the relevant parents, in which case it should only be information about the parent's own son or daughter. It is very important that all staff adhere to these rules for legal reasons – not even addresses or telephone numbers should be passed on to other parents.