

# British Overseas School Policy: Curriculum



## A. Aims

The curriculum should be considered broadly as the entire planned learning experience. This includes formal lessons as well as enrichment activities, events and learning that take place outside the classroom. The Curriculum Policy should be seen within the overall aims and ethos of the School, which are at the core of its objectives.

Our curriculum is designed to allow each student to:

1. successfully progress through the stages of their education using a vertically integrated programme of study
2. become a successful learner, who enjoys learning, makes progress and achieves their academic potential;
3. become an independent learner who develops the powers to question, analyse and create
4. become a confident adult who is able to live a safe, healthy and fulfilling life;
5. become a responsible citizen who can make a positive contribution to society.

With this in mind it is intended that our curriculum is balanced:

- a. between breadth, to allow coverage of a wide range of knowledge and skills, and depth to allow the development of specific areas of interest
- b. between compulsory subjects, which reflect the school's educational priorities, and optional ones, which reflect a student's own preferences
- c. between differentiated levels of opportunity, task and learning, which allow students to find their own challenges that suit their own aptitudes in the breadth and depth of their study
- d. between the local, which takes into account the school's context, and the global, which encourages students to look beyond our walls and broaden their horizons
- e. between the classroom, which is the home of formalized, academic, learning, and the world outside, which is the territory of unplanned learning and personal growth
- f. between the development of self, in the widest sense, and the contribution to others whether in a group, a team, an organisation or a society.

## B. Breadth & Specialisation

Based on the National Curriculum of England, the BOS curriculum, from Pre-Nursery to Year 11, exposes students to a wide range of academic disciplines, skills and activities.

At a formal level the range covers: English language (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and literature, mathematics, science, humanities, modern foreign languages, information technology, physical activity, the artistic and the creative.

Such a broad range of exposure persists until Key Stage 4, when students are able to make choices about aspects of their curriculum. This reflects our firm belief that early exposure informs later specialization.

The school offers a wide range of after-school enrichment activities, both in the primary and secondary schools. Such activities are considered important to students' development.

### C. Obligation & Choice

Opportunities for student choice exist at various stages of their education: our Early Years philosophy is, in part, based on student choices. However, these choices tend to fall *within* subjects and *within* lessons. Choices *between* subjects are postponed until Key Stage 4 when students have the opportunity to choose between optional subjects, which make up a third of their curriculum.

For all students, choice does exist for after-school enrichment activities.

Choice encourages students to enjoy their learning and to take responsibility for their own learning.

### D. Accessibility and Challenge

BOS admissions policies are selective, as such the student body has traditionally been relatively homogenous; however, differences occur and are welcomed.

The curriculum should allow for sufficient differentiation to accommodate differences in aptitude and allow each student to find their own levels of challenge.

Nevertheless, the school has high expectations of students, which reflects our belief that everyone is working towards the same finishing line – even though they may do so at differing speeds.

Therefore, we provide a curriculum that balances accessibility and challenge. Sufficiently accessible to be comprehensible and relevant; sufficiently challenging to stimulate and provoke thought.

### E. National & International

The school's choice of the National Curriculum, is indicative of our belief in British education and the high regard in which it is held by our parent community. Espousing the National Curriculum allows our community to transfer easily between British schools around the world – a fact of no little importance given their mobility.

In addition, our employment of the NC secures many aspects of our curricular priorities, including breadth and depth. It also ensures an approach to learning that encourages enquiry, application and acquisition of skills.

It is the case that the NC is used as a framework for learning; it is not followed slavishly. A degree of flexibility means the school enhances the National Curriculum in some areas and diverges from it in others. Many of these adjustments reflect our local context for example, the emphasis on English language (EAL) and the inclusion of Urdu.

Other adjustments reflect the school's ethos of internationalism: the use of the International Primary Curriculum as the vehicle for learning in the arts and humanities in the primary school, the use of International GCSE syllabuses at the end of the secondary school and our incorporation of Round Square Ideals into our secondary school work.

## F. Formal & Informal

The formal curriculum is contained within school timetables that create a lattice work, which directs, supports and governs the school day. At the BOS it begins at 7.45am (excepting the Pre-Nursery class) and ends at various times depending on the age of the children.

Within this formal structure subjects and activities are allocated slots that reflects the school's priorities given its most finite of resources – time.

However, a great deal of learning takes place outside of these formal structures: break time, enrichment activities, team and individual sports, drama, school trips, charitable work and community service. The school considers all of these to be important learning opportunities and makes every effort to ensure that students make the most of the opportunities.

Such is the importance that the school places on learning that would traditionally be associated with the “informal curriculum” we seek to incorporate that learning into the more formal timetable. In the traditional classroom, this would include group and teamwork, presentations and role play.

We also seek to innovate within the curriculum by incorporating activities, which would traditionally be viewed as “informal”, into the more traditional framework, giving students the opportunity to go “off-timetable”, to explore different kinds of learning and to develop different kinds of skills and attributes.

## G. Self & Others

At its narrowest, education is the delayed gratification of the 'self': *you* will be rewarded for *your* time and *your* efforts in *your* future. At the BOS we believe in fostering a culture in which students are encouraged to contribute to the well-being of the wider community because that *contribution to others* is rewarding *regardless of self*.

This culture should permeate all levels of the school, whether, for example, through charitable fund-raising, care for the environment or community service.

Finally, we would like to inculcate in our students a belief that learning itself is rewarding; that learning is intrinsically valuable. That it comes sometimes when you least expect it, in ways that are surprising. But whenever and however it comes, or is sought, it is always worthwhile.

Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review: October 2026