Curriculum Policy

This policy is a statement for the academic year 2026/27 and thereafter. Progressive plans for the Academy are part of and will continue to be developed in the Academy Improvement Plan.

1. Curriculum Overview

1.1 The Belvedere Academy aims to prepare its students for adult life by helping them to fulfil their potential in all areas. Each student is encouraged to achieve their personal best. Central to this is pupils' ability to know more, remember more and do more over time.

1.2 The Academy recognises the need for a broad and balanced curriculum and is aware of the vital contribution made by pastoral and Enrichment activities to the development of the whole person. It is important that students are given every opportunity to be part of a team, to take responsibility, to develop a wide range of interests and to be of service to others. All students are expected to participate in extra-curricular activities to develop educational interests and to promote independence and inter-personal links with students in other year groups.

1.3 The Academy's curriculum is ambitious and is designed to give all of our students, particularly disadvantaged students and students with SEN and/or disabilities, the knowledge and cultural capacity they need to succeed in life, increasing their fluency and independence.

1.4 Underpinning the Academy's curriculum is the need to equip all of our students with the necessary knowledge so that they can readily embrace the next phase of their education, be it Upper School, Sixth Form or Apprenticeships / University.

1.5 The curriculum is delivered through teaching and learning across all subject areas. The timetable operates on a two-week cycle of 50 one-hour periods. All departments are required to have curriculum maps.

1.6 In Lower School, students experience a wide range of subjects across the main areas of the learning experience (scientific, mathematical, technological, aesthetic and creative, human and social, physical, moral and spiritual). All students study English, Mathematics, Science, Religious Studies, History, Geography, a Language, Drama, Creative Arts based subjects, Music, ICT and Physical Education. The Year 7 intake is placed in mixed ability sets for Mathematics and English. All students study one Foreign Language throughout Years 7-9.

1.7 In Year 9, all students continue to follow a broad curriculum, similar to that in Lower School. In Citizenship, students will commence their GCSE course as the academy's policy is for all Year 10 students to sit their GCSE Citizenship examination at the end of Year 10. In March of Year 9, all students will be required to choose their optional based GCSE / BTEC subjects. All students are expected to choose four optional based subjects unless they choose Separate Sciences, when three will be selected. In this latter case for pupils opting for three GCSE / BTEC courses, the academy offers an 'Enriching Opportunities' course (EoP) in which pupils learn basic life skills (e.g. CV writing, job applications).

1.8 In Years 10 and 11 all students follow an academic curriculum with a broad range of GCSE subjects. All students will sit their Citizenship GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10, and this acts as a real confidence booster for all as they start Year 11. Students also have the choice to study either the Science Trilogy (equivalent to two GCSEs) or the three

separate Sciences to GCSE level. Teaching and learning take place in ability sets for the core GCSE subjects and in mixed ability groups for optional subjects. An intervention programme operates to provide individual support for identified students in Upper School. Careers Education and RSE are integrated into the PSHE programme. Students are encouraged to participate in a wide range of Enrichment activities and to seek opportunities to take the lead in these.

1.9 There is an open choice at 'A' Level / BTEC level, and many students cross the Arts/Science divide; however, the emphasis tends to be on specialisation rather than maintaining breadth and balance.

1.10 In Year 12, most students choose to study three subjects from a wide range of courses on offer. Students can also opt to take the Extended Project Qualification. Applications to study the EPQ will be considered based on internal assessment data.

1.11 Sixth Formers are involved in the wider life of the academy by organising clubs and doing duties. Many students gain a great deal from the extra-curricular activities which provide valuable learning experiences outside 'A' Level study.

1.12 Independent careers guidance is given before choices are made at both GCSE and 'A' Level by our external Careers Advisor. Students are taught across the curriculum in well-equipped specialist rooms. Wherever grouping or setting operates there is regular monitoring to ensure that students follow a programme appropriate to their learning needs.

1.13 We expect our students to take full advantage of all the opportunities on offer to them and view their education as an active and participative experience. As such, we expect that all students complete all of their courses (both compulsory and optional) wherever possible.

1.14 Homework is considered an integral part of the learning experience and is set for all year groups. Homework is recorded in the student's planner.

2. Changing Subjects

2.1 The Belvedere Academy expects all students to embrace the curriculum offer and to fully partake in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that take place.

2.2 For GCSE optional subjects, the academy recognises that in exceptional circumstances there may be a desire from a student to change an optional GCSE subject. The deadline for all changes is the end of September of Year 10. In such cases, the request to change a subject must be in writing from a parent / carer and addressed to the Vice Principal (Curriculum) for consideration.

2.3 The academy expects all students to complete GCSE qualifications in all of their GCSE subjects (both core and optional) in line with statutory guidance that pupils follow the National Curriculum. Any major concerns about GCSE qualifications must be addressed in writing to the Vice Principal (Curriculum). Each concern will be considered on an individual basis and appropriate, additional support (see Appendix 1) will be offered to ensure each student continues to follow a full, balanced curriculum and allows them to realise their potential.

2.4 For A Level study, all students are required to choose at least three subjects for study in Years 12 and 13. The academy recognises that in exceptional circumstances there may be a desire from a student to change a subject. The deadline for all changes is the end of September of Year 12. In such cases, the student is required to put this request in writing (via email/letter) to the Vice Principal (Curriculum) for consideration. Any major concerns about A Level qualifications must be addressed in writing to the Vice Principal (Curriculum) as per paragraph 2.3 above.

3. Academy Specialism

3.1 Music is a central part of the Academy offer and will be our primary specialism from September 2022. Academic Music lessons are taught across all Key Stages, where our pupils receive two lessons a fortnight from Year 7 to 9 with the option to continue their musical studies in GCSE Music and A Level Music. In addition to their academic studies, all of our pupils have the opportunity to take up instrumental or vocal tuition with one of our outstanding peripatetic teachers, with a range of exciting options on offer including guitar, piano, violin, flute, clarinet, saxophone, drums and cello. Singing lessons are available from specialists in classical and musical theatre genres.

3.2 What makes the Music Department truly special at Belvedere is our outstanding range of extra-curricular activities on offer. We believe that there is something for everyone; from the school's Orchestra to Chamber Choir, Chamber Orchestra, Whole School Choir, Year 7 Choir, Rock Band and Ukulele Club. Our pupils are also encouraged to create their own ensembles, producing some fantastic groups in previous years such as Gospel Choir and Musical Theatre Choir. The Music Department received the 'Outstanding Music Department' award at the annual Music Teacher Awards for Excellence ceremony in 2019 and continue to go from strength to strength.

3. Review

3.1 This policy will be reviewed annually, and in accordance with the schedule drawn up by the Principal and agreed by the LGB.

Last Revised and Modified by SLT: September 2026 **Next review:** September 2028

Appendix 1 - Additional Support

Paragraph 2.3 of the above policy references additional support that can be given to any pupil(s) who is struggling with any of their subjects

This appendix seeks to clarify what this support may involve and the processes that pupils and families can follow:

1. If a pupil feels that they are in a position in which they are struggling in or are anxious about a subject, in the first instance, the pupil (and/or the pupil's parent/carer) needs to approach their class teacher.

2. The class teacher will then look at ways in which the pupil can be offered more support / intervention dependent on the issues involved. The classroom teacher will communicate such strategies with the pupil's parent/carer and their Subject / Curriculum Leader (and the SENDCO if applicable). It is hoped that this additional support will help to reduce any pupil's anxiety / issues around underperformance and lead to the pupil continuing to study the subject in question.

3. Should the classroom teacher's intervention / support not work, then the pupil / pupil's parent/carer should escalate any further concerns to the Subject / Curriculum Leader. If the pupil

has any additional needs, it is at this stage that the Subject/ Curriculum Leader may involve the SENDCO(s) to provide additional direct support and help.

4. Appropriate strategies will be put in place by the Subject / Curriculum Leader and/or the SENDCO to try and get the pupil back on track and / or to feel less anxious regarding progress in the subject. This should involve additional meetings between pupil / parent and Subject / Curriculum Leader.

5. Should the additional support strategies fail to lead to any improvement then the Subject / Curriculum Leader in conjunction with the SENDCO (if applicable) should seek to arrange a further meeting with the pupil and parent(s) / carer(s). During this meeting, further strategies should be explored in an attempt to improve the pupil's progress / engagement.

6. Should the additional strategies fail to see improvement, and if the general consensus from pupil / parent/carer / Subject Leader and/or SENDCO is that the support strategies have not worked, then this becomes a 'major concern' and the parent should address this 'major concern' in writing to the Vice Principal (Curriculum)

7. In very exceptional circumstances and if the academy is convinced that all avenues of support have been explored and exhausted as per above, it may be considered that it is in the best interests of the pupil for them to discontinue that subject. This will only be done with full agreement between the pupil, parent/carer and the academy.