Curriculum Policy

St Edward's Cheltenham

Document control

Field	Details
School	St Edward's Cheltenham
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Approved by	Proprietor, Mr A Khan
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1. Purpose, status and scope

This policy explains how the school designs, documents, teaches, evaluates and improves its curriculum. It applies to all phases, subjects, lessons, enrichment, remote education and off-site or alternative provision commissioned by the school.

The National Curriculum is not compulsory for an ordinary independent school unless the School has chosen to adopt elements of it or another specific requirement applies. The proprietor will ensure that a written curriculum policy, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, is drawn up and implemented effectively. The policy and supporting curriculum documentation will take account of pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs, including pupils with an EHC plan, provide for the matters required by the Independent School Standards and give every pupil the opportunity to learn and make progress. The curriculum and supporting documentation will 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.

- The curriculum will be coherent in intent, suitably broad, well sequenced and taught effectively.
- The school will be able to demonstrate what pupils are intended to know and do, how learning builds over time, and how leaders know that the intended curriculum is being implemented.
- Curriculum decisions will place pupils' education, safety, inclusion and future opportunities ahead of convenience, reputation or narrow performance measures.

2. Legal and regulatory framework

Source	Application
Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended	Part 1 curriculum and teaching standards; Part 2 spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Part 6 information; Part 8 leadership and management.
Independent School Standards Guidance, April 2026	Current DfE explanation of curriculum, teaching, RSE, careers, equality, political impartiality and implementation expectations.
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026	Safeguarding through curriculum, preventative education, online safety, external providers, disclosures and teaching about harmful behaviours.
EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, September 2026	Mandatory learning, development, assessment and welfare requirements where the school provides EYFS.
Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance, for introduction September 2026	Mandatory Relationships Education in primary and RSE in secondary; independent-school PSHE and related policy and consultation duties.
Equality Act 2010 and EHRC technical guidance for schools	Non-discrimination, accessibility and reasonable adjustments in curriculum design, teaching, assessment and enrichment.
Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND framework	EHC plan duties and the requirement to consider plan provision and outcomes; wider SEND guidance applies according to school status and commissioning arrangements.
Prevent duty guidance	Risk-based duty to prevent pupils being drawn into terrorism while protecting free inquiry, debate and lawful expression.
Boarding schools or residential special schools national minimum standards, where applicable	Curriculum, activities, study, cultural needs, boarding experience and preparation for adult life.
Ofsted non-association independent school inspection toolkit and operating guidance for use from September 2026, where applicable	Evidence expectations for curriculum coverage, content, sequencing, implementation, inclusion, assessment, achievement and readiness for the next stage.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning in this policy
Curriculum	All planned learning and educational experiences provided or commissioned by the school, including subjects, PSHE, RSE, careers, enrichment, educational visits, remote learning and alternative provision.

Term	Meaning in this policy
Curriculum intent	The knowledge, skills, understanding, values and outcomes the school intends pupils to secure.
Curriculum implementation	How the curriculum is planned, resourced, taught, adapted, assessed and quality assured in practice.
Curriculum impact	What pupils know, remember, understand and can do, the progress they make and their readiness for the next stage.
Scheme of work	A sequenced subject or phase plan identifying content, progression, teaching, assessment, resources and adaptation.
PSHE / PSHCE	Personal, social, health and economic education, including citizenship where the school uses that term.
Relationships Education / RSE	The statutory subjects for primary and secondary pupils respectively, delivered under the school's separate RSE Policy.
Preventative education	Planned teaching that helps pupils recognise risk, understand healthy and harmful behaviour, stay safe and seek help, including online.
Reasonable adjustment	A change that avoids substantial disadvantage for a disabled pupil, where reasonable.
Alternative provision	Education arranged away from the school's usual site or timetable by another provider, while the commissioning school retains responsibility for suitability, attendance, safety and progress.

4. School curriculum profile

SCHOOL-SPECIFIC POLICY INFORMATION

- Registered age range: 11-18
- Phases provided: SECONDARY / SIXTH FORM
- Provision: DAY
- Principal language of instruction: ENGLISH
- Curriculum model or distinctive character: The curriculum is organised in three phases: Lower School (Years 7-8), Upper School (Years 9-11) and Sixth Form (Lower and Upper Sixth), with long-, medium- and short-term planning.

5. Curriculum principles and aims

- Provide an ambitious, broad and balanced education suited to the school's pupils and context.
- Secure strong foundations in communication, language, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Build knowledge and skills cumulatively so that pupils remember more, understand more and can do more.
- Enable every pupil to learn and make progress from their starting point, including pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs or other barriers.
- Promote curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, scholarship, physical development and aesthetic appreciation.
- Prepare pupils effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society and for their next stage of education, training or employment.
- Promote respect for others and the protected characteristics, without promoting unlawful discrimination or stereotyping.
- Actively promote democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, without undermining these values.
- Support safeguarding, wellbeing, healthy relationships, online safety, financial understanding and responsible citizenship.

6. Curriculum entitlement and breadth

For pupils of compulsory school age, the curriculum will provide full-time supervised education and appropriate experience in the areas below. The balance, content and organisation of these areas may vary appropriately according to pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs and the school's curriculum model. However, for pupils of compulsory school age, the curriculum will provide experience in each of the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative areas required by the Independent School Standards.

Curriculum area	Minimum entitlement and evidence
Linguistic	Speaking, listening, reading and writing; language and communication across subjects; modern or classical languages where offered.
Mathematical	Number, calculation, mathematical reasoning, problem solving, data and appropriate mathematical applications.
Scientific	Knowledge and understanding of the natural, physical and material world; practical inquiry and safe investigation.
Technological	Computing, digital literacy, design, making and critical use of technology appropriate to phase and provision.
Human and social	History, geography, society, culture, religion and belief, citizenship and understanding of the wider world.
Physical	Physical competence, health, fitness, teamwork, safe participation and opportunities appropriate to pupils' needs.
Aesthetic and creative	Art, music, drama, design, literature and other opportunities to create, perform, interpret and appreciate.
PSHE / PSHCE	Personal, social, health and economic education reflecting the school's aims and ethos and encouraging respect for others, with regard to protected characteristics.
Relationships Education and RSE	Statutory age-appropriate provision through the separate RSE Policy and mapped curriculum.
Careers and next stage	Accurate, current and impartial guidance for pupils receiving secondary education, enabling informed choices in pupils' best interests.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM OFFER

- Subject and curriculum offer by phase: **Secondary: Years 7-8 experience a broad range of subjects; pupils make some option choices in Year 8 and GCSE choices in Year 9, supported by advice and guidance. Sixth Form: Key Stage 5 provides a wide and varied post-16 curriculum with clear progression towards higher education and/or the world of work.**

7. Planning, sequencing and curriculum documentation

- Each subject and phase will have a clear rationale, end points and progression model.
- Long-term plans will map coverage and sequence; medium-term plans or schemes of work will identify content, progression, teaching and assessment; short-term planning will be proportionate and useful.
- Plans will build on prior learning, identify essential vocabulary and concepts, and avoid unnecessary repetition or gaps.
- Curriculum plans will identify how pupils with different starting points and needs can access ambitious learning.
- Assessment opportunities will be selected because they reveal understanding and inform teaching, not merely to generate data.
- Changes to courses, qualifications, time allocation or subject withdrawal will be educationally justified, approved and communicated.

Each subject or phase will maintain curriculum documentation proportionate to the provision and sufficient to demonstrate its rationale and intended end points, coverage and sequencing, assessment approach, adaptations for pupils' needs, appropriate resources and arrangements for review and improvement. Detailed documentation may take the form of curriculum maps, long- and medium-term plans, schemes of work or other appropriate planning materials.

8. Teaching and learning

- Teaching will enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase understanding and develop skills.
- Teachers will demonstrate secure subject and curriculum knowledge and understand pupils' needs, starting points and prior learning.
- Lessons will be well planned, use suitable methods and resources, and manage time and behaviour effectively.
- Explanations, modelling, questioning, practice and feedback will be selected to help pupils understand and remember important content.
- Teaching will foster self-motivation, application, intellectual, physical and creative effort, and the ability to think and learn independently.

- Classroom practice will not discriminate unlawfully, and materials will be accurate, age appropriate, accessible and free from avoidable bias or stereotyping.
- Where teaching identifies a safeguarding concern or prompts a disclosure, staff will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy immediately.

12. Secondary curriculum

- Pupils will continue to receive broad experience across the curriculum and will not be narrowed prematurely.
- Options and pathways will be based on aptitude, need, aspiration and progression, not stereotypes or institutional convenience.
- Qualification choices, entry decisions and any course changes will be explained clearly to pupils and parents and kept under review.
- RSE, PSHE, careers, physical education and wider personal development will remain planned entitlements and will not disappear because examination courses become more demanding.

13. Sixth form and post-16 curriculum

Where post-16 education is provided, each student will follow a suitable programme that reflects prior attainment, ability, aspirations, SEND and progression goals.

- Programmes will include appropriately challenging qualifications or courses, independent study, enrichment, careers and preparation for higher education, training or employment.
- Students will receive accurate guidance before course selection and timely support if a programme is no longer suitable.
- Leaders will monitor retention, attendance, achievement, destinations and whether particular groups experience unequal access or outcomes.

14. PSHE, Relationships Education, RSE and preventative education

The School will have regard to the revised statutory guidance on Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education. Pupils receiving primary education must receive Relationships Education and pupils receiving secondary education must receive RSE. The separate statutory Health Education requirement does not apply to independent schools; however, the School will provide appropriate health education through PSHE and the wider curriculum in accordance with the Independent School Standards.

The School's RSE Policy and curriculum will reflect the revised guidance, including applicable consultation, policy, resource and withdrawal requirements. Preventative education will be planned and progressive and reinforced through teaching, pastoral provision, behaviour expectations, safeguarding routes and wider school life.

- Preventative education will be planned, progressive and reinforced through curriculum, pastoral systems, behaviour expectations, reporting routes and wider school life.
- Pupils will learn about healthy and harmful relationships, consent, boundaries, sexual harassment and violence, discrimination, online risks, image-based abuse, pornography where age appropriate, financial harms, misinformation and how to seek help.
- Resources and external providers will be checked for accuracy, age suitability, accessibility, balance and safeguarding arrangements.
- A visiting provider does not replace the school's responsibility for curriculum quality, political impartiality, safeguarding or responding to disclosures.

15. SMSC and fundamental British values

- The curriculum and wider school life will enable pupils to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding appropriate to age and aptitude.
- Pupils will learn to distinguish right from wrong, respect the civil and criminal law of England, accept responsibility, contribute positively and understand different faiths and cultures.
- The school will actively promote democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Teaching will encourage respect for other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics, while remaining age appropriate and consistent with the school's lawful ethos.
- No curriculum or teaching will undermine fundamental British values or promote intolerance, hatred or unlawful discrimination.

16. Equality, SEND, EHC plans, medical needs and disadvantage

- Curriculum ambition will not be reduced automatically because a pupil has SEND, a disability, medical need, mental-health need, social-care involvement, interrupted education or disadvantage.
- Teachers will make reasonable adjustments and suitable adaptations to access, communication, materials, teaching, assessment, environment and enrichment.
- The school will consider the special educational provision and outcomes specified in each EHC plan and will participate in reviews and consultations as required.
- Curriculum adaptations will preserve entitlement and progression wherever possible; withdrawal from subjects or activities will be exceptional, reasoned, time limited and reviewed.
- Pupils who face barriers will receive timely high-quality teaching and targeted support. Leaders will evaluate whether support closes gaps and improves access, belonging and progress.
- The pupil and parents will be involved appropriately in decisions, subject to safeguarding and age considerations.

17. English, language development and EAL

- Pupils will develop speaking, listening, reading and writing in English across the curriculum.
- Where a pupil is new to English or uses English as an additional language, the school will assess language proficiency and prior learning and provide suitable support without confusing language acquisition with SEND.
- Pupils may use home languages strategically where this supports understanding, identity and access, while continuing to develop academic English.
- Where the principal language of instruction is not English, the school will ensure that pupils receive appropriate teaching in written and spoken English as required by the Independent School Standards.

18. Careers, options, transition and next-stage preparation

Pupils receiving secondary education will have access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented impartially, enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential. Guidance will be provided in good time to support significant education, training and career decisions.

- Guidance will serve pupils' best interests and will not favour the school's own sixth form, academic routes or any particular provider.
- Curriculum learning will connect appropriately to careers, further and higher education, apprenticeships, technical and vocational routes and employment.
- Support will be tailored for pupils with SEND, disadvantage, care experience, persistent absence or other barriers, with high expectations maintained.
- Transition records, option advice and destination information will be retained and reviewed to improve provision.

19. Assessment, feedback, reporting and progress

- Assessment will identify what pupils know and can do, misconceptions, gaps and next teaching steps.
- Teachers will use a proportionate mix of observation, questioning, discussion, practical work, low-stakes checks, formal assessment and external examinations where applicable.
- Assessment will be valid for its purpose and accessible, with reasonable adjustments and special consideration where appropriate.
- Data will not replace professional understanding of pupils or create unnecessary workload. Leaders will examine work, teaching, assessment and pupil voice together.
- Parents will receive clear information about attainment, progress, strengths, priorities and next steps at suitable intervals.
- Concerns about progress will lead to timely support, curriculum review or specialist assessment rather than waiting for failure.

20. Homework and independent study

- Homework or independent study will have a clear educational purpose, be appropriate to age and workload, and be accessible to pupils with SEND or limited home resources.
- The school will explain expectations, deadlines, support and consequences clearly and will avoid homework practices that create disproportionate disadvantage.
- Boarding study arrangements will provide suitable space, supervision, support and access to resources.

21. Enrichment, educational visits, speakers and external providers

- Clubs, visits, performances, competitions, sport, outdoor education, leadership, service and cultural experiences form part of the wider curriculum and will be planned inclusively.
- Participation will not be restricted unlawfully, and reasonable adjustments and financial barriers will be considered.
- Educational visits will have clear learning and welfare purposes and will be risk assessed under the Educational Visits and Risk Assessment procedures.
- Visiting speakers and external providers will be subject to due diligence for safeguarding, expertise, content, political impartiality, age suitability and equality.
- The school will agree in advance how questions, disclosures, safeguarding concerns and controversial content will be handled.

22. Educational technology, online safety and artificial intelligence

- Digital technologies will be used where they improve access, practice, creativity, feedback, collaboration or efficiency without displacing essential teaching or human judgement.
- Online-safety education will be integrated across relevant subjects and will address content, contact, conduct and commerce risks.
- Pupils will be taught to evaluate sources, recognise misinformation, disinformation, manipulation, deepfakes and AI-generated content, and understand privacy, copyright and responsible use.
- Generative AI use will follow the school's approved rules. Pupils must not use AI to impersonate, harass, create sexualised imagery, evade learning or submit unacknowledged work.
- Staff will check the accuracy, bias, privacy, age suitability and safeguarding implications of digital and AI tools before use.

23. Alternative provision, remote education and off-site learning

- Alternative provision will be selected in the pupil's best interests and will have a suitable educational purpose, curriculum, timetable, safeguarding arrangements and review plan.
- The commissioning school remains responsible for knowing where the pupil is, confirming attendance, monitoring education and welfare, and reviewing whether the placement remains suitable.
- Remote education will be planned, accessible and appropriately supervised and will not be used to disguise exclusion, off-rolling or an indefinite reduced curriculum.
- Pupils educated off site will continue to receive required safeguarding, PSHE, RSE, careers and transition support.

24. Political impartiality and controversial issues

The School will preclude the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject. Where political issues are brought to pupils' attention while they are attending the School, while taking part in extra-curricular activities provided or organised by or on behalf of the School, or through the promotion at School of extra-curricular activities, the School will take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

A balanced presentation does not require mechanical equal time, false equivalence, neutrality about unlawful conduct or the withholding of established factual knowledge. Staff will facilitate informed discussion and critical inquiry, distinguish evidence from interpretation and opinion, and ensure that pupils are able to consider political issues fairly and dispassionately.

- Staff may facilitate informed discussion and critical inquiry but must distinguish evidence, interpretation, opinion and advocacy.
- Resources, speakers and campaigns will be checked for political balance and educational purpose.
- Pupils may express lawful views respectfully; staff will challenge misinformation, prejudice, intimidation and attempts to silence others.

25. Resources, staffing and professional development

- The proprietor and Headteacher will ensure that staffing, rooms, equipment, books, digital access and specialist resources are sufficient to implement the curriculum safely and effectively.
- Teachers will have or develop the subject, phase, SEND and assessment expertise needed for their roles.
- Subject leaders will identify training needs, support colleagues and evaluate whether professional development changes practice and pupil learning.
- Resources will be reviewed for accuracy, accessibility, diversity, age suitability, copyright, data protection and safeguarding.

26. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Core responsibility
Proprietor / governing body	Ensure the Independent School Standards are met continually; approve the policy; scrutinise implementation, inclusion, outcomes and resources; require improvement.
Headteacher	Set curriculum direction; ensure appropriate plans and schemes exist and are implemented; deploy staff and resources; report assurance and address weaknesses.
Curriculum lead / senior leaders	Coordinate design, timetabling, assessment, quality assurance, phase continuity and improvement; ensure statutory and school-specific requirements are mapped.
Phase and subject leaders	Define progression and end points; maintain plans and resources; support teaching; review work, assessment and outcomes; act on findings.
SENDCO, DSL, pastoral, medical and careers leads	Ensure curriculum decisions reflect need, safeguarding, equality, wellbeing, EHC plans and next-stage preparation.
Teachers	Know and teach the planned curriculum; assess understanding; adapt appropriately; maintain high expectations; report safeguarding and curriculum concerns.
Pupils	Engage, ask questions, complete work, respect others and contribute feedback about learning and access.
Parents	Support attendance and learning, share relevant information, engage with reporting and raise concerns through appropriate routes.

27. Quality assurance, monitoring and proprietor oversight

- Leaders will evaluate curriculum intent, implementation and impact through a proportionate combination of planning review, lesson visits, work scrutiny, assessment, pupil and parent voice, subject discussion and outcomes.
- Quality assurance will test whether curriculum plans are actually taught, whether pupils remember important content, whether adaptations work and whether all groups can participate and progress.
- Leaders will avoid judging curriculum quality from data or isolated lesson observations alone.
- Weaknesses will lead to specific actions, named owners, resources, timescales and follow-up checks.
- The proprietor will receive regular assurance covering curriculum breadth, implementation, teaching, inclusion, achievement, RSE, careers, EYFS and any alternative provision.

Assurance area	Evidence expected
Coverage and sequencing	Current curriculum maps, timetables, schemes of work, progression and end points.
Implementation and teaching	Visits, work, subject discussion, staff expertise, resources and action follow-up.
Learning and progress	Assessment, pupil work and responses, progress from starting points and readiness for next stage.
Inclusion	Adjustments, EHC plan alignment, participation, group analysis and impact of support.
Statutory and safeguarding curriculum	PSHE, RSE, preventative education, online safety, careers and political impartiality.
EYFS / post-16 / boarding / alternative provision	Phase-specific curriculum, welfare, attendance, progress and transition evidence where applicable.

28. Information for parents, complaints and review

- The school will provide clear information about curriculum content, organisation, qualifications and how parents can find out more.

- The RSE Policy will be published online and made available free of charge, with parental consultation and resource-access arrangements as required.
- Parents may raise curriculum concerns with the relevant teacher or leader and may use the Complaints Procedure where the matter is not resolved.
- Safeguarding concerns and disclosures will be handled immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and will not wait for a complaint outcome.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following legal change, material curriculum change, inspection findings or a significant concern.

29. Policies to be read in conjunction

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Non-Discrimination and Inclusion Policy
- SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan
- PSHCE Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Preventative Education Policy
- Internet Policy and Acceptable Use Agreements
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Risk Assessment and Educational Visits procedures
- First Aid Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Data Protection Privacy Notice
- Complaints Procedure
- Careers Policy or programme, where applicable
- EYFS policies and curriculum documentation, where applicable
- Boarding policies and procedures, where applicable
- Assessment, reporting, homework and examinations procedures

30. Source register

Source	Application
Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended	Binding curriculum, teaching, RSE, SMSC, information and leadership requirements.
Independent School Standards Guidance, April 2026	Current DfE interpretation of the standards and evidence of effective implementation.
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026	Safeguarding curriculum, preventative education, online safety, external providers and responding to disclosures.
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Multi-agency safeguarding context and inclusive, anti-discriminatory practice.
EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, September 2026	Learning, development, assessment and welfare requirements for EYFS.
Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance, September 2026	Revised mandatory primary Relationships Education and secondary RSE requirements and delivery guidance.
Equality Act 2010 and EHRC technical guidance for schools in England	Protected characteristics, accessibility, curriculum equality and reasonable adjustments.
Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice	EHC plan framework and, where applicable, SEND responsibilities and good practice.
Prevent duty guidance	Curriculum contribution to preventing radicalisation and promoting resilience while preserving lawful debate.

Source	Application
Relevant independent-school inspectorate framework and guidance (ISI or Ofsted, as applicable)	Inspection expectations concerning curriculum coverage, sequencing, effective implementation, inclusion, assessment, achievement and readiness for pupils' next stage.
DfE reading framework 2023 and writing framework 2025	Non-statutory evidence-informed support for foundational literacy.
Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, June 2026	Good-practice reference; the binding independent-school careers requirement is contained in the Independent School Standards.
Boarding schools or residential special schools national minimum standards, May 2026	Applies where the school provides residential accommodation.