

Curriculum Policy: Adapting the Curriculum for Individual Girls

Adapting the curriculum: principles and practice

Any adaptation of the curriculum which affects the entitlement of a student to our full offer is not a decision to be taken lightly. In all cases and in all year groups we would expect any decision to adapt a student's curriculum to be taken through liaison with subject staff, SENCO, Heads of House and Head of Sixth Form (for Years 12 and 13), parents and SLT as well as the individual student. In the case of main school pupils, Years 7-11, the final decision regarding any change to be made lies with the Headteacher and will follow a formal request by the parent. In the sixth form the decision to make changes lies with the Head of Sixth Form in liaison with the Headteacher.

As SGGS is a selective school, parents choose to send their child to us and so accept the distance that needs to be travelled to attend. In choosing to send their child to SGGS they are therefore accepting that any extra-curricular activities even at the highest levels (including eg regional and national), need to accommodate the school day and the full timetable. However, the welfare of the student is at the heart of this decision-making and any changes need to be made in the light of what would best serve her interests: we want our students to excel in all that they do.

Consideration would be given to adapting the curriculum for any pupil if:

- ill-health or extenuating circumstances in her home life, such as the death or illness of a parent/carer, has led to a sustained period of absence;
- from our tracking processes we identify that a pupil is already underperforming or is likely to underperform in the end of year internal and/or external assessments if she continues to follow a full curriculum. The decision to adapt the curriculum would be based upon the professional judgement of subject staff and the Headteacher and in consultation with the pupil and parents;
- a pupil participates in sports or the arts at a national level, which therefore requires them to commit significant hours outside of school to practice, matches, concerts etc.

If it is felt that a student is not able to cope with the demands of the curriculum, either she or her parent/carer needs to contact school, and the relevant Head of House or Head of Sixth Form (if the student is in Year 12 or 13) will liaise with the SENCO. In cases where there is significant underperformance school will make contact with parents. Discussions will then take place on how best to move forward and with advice and assistance from members of staff. In the first instance, help from subject teacher(s) and SENCO should be sought (coordinated by the Head of House or Head of Sixth Form) as soon as difficulties arise so that remedial action can be taken and useful advice given on areas of weakness. Time should then be allowed for improvements to take place before any significant changes are implemented. Our preference is for our girls to have their full entitlement if it is at all possible in these cases.

Dropping a subject at GCSE or A-level: processes

The school will make every effort to see that students who embark upon an examination course see the course through to its satisfactory completion, ie grade 5 or above at GCSE, and grade E or above at A-level.

If a colleague is concerned about a GCSE student's lack of progress, the concern should be raised first with the tutor, who has the background knowledge. There are sometimes domestic or personal reasons which cause a pupil to underachieve and if it seems in her best interests to permit a lightening of the examination load, this may be considered. The tutor will consult with the SENCO and Head of House – stage A – who will interview the pupil and seek to ascertain whether improvement is possible or likely. If a pupil wishes to drop the subject and it seems likely that reducing the load will improve the overall learning

situation, the Head of House will liaise with the Deputy Head and their SLT link - stage B. Parents will be consulted, and will confirm in writing their agreement for their child not to be entered for the examination in that subject. Normally this will take place after Year 10 examinations or Year 11 trial examinations. The Exams Officer, School Office and Data Manager are advised at this point.

Where difficulties encountered by a sixth form student persist to the point where the student wishes to give up the subject concerned, she should discuss the situation with her tutor and seek an interview with the Head of Sixth Form – stage A. Advice should also be sought about careers as career and higher education opportunities could be severely reduced. The Head of Sixth Form will discuss the situation with the student and consult the tutor, the Careers Adviser and the Deputy Head. The agreement of parents will be sought before any final decision is reached – stage B.

There may be occasions when performance in trial examinations at GCSE or A-level is disappointingly lower than anticipated. In this case, the school may recommend a smaller number of examination subjects so that the student can work to guarantee success in other subjects, particularly the core subjects at GCSE. Parents will be advised of the recommendation and their agreement sought.

From time to time there may be educational reasons for the school to conclude that entry to a public examination is not justified. Failure to make acceptable efforts to meet the requirements of the course, demonstrable inability to meet the minimum demands of the examination, or repeated or lengthy unjustified absence are among the reasons why entry may be refused. The school will warn students and parents in writing that entry to the examination may be refused unless there is acceptable improvement, such warning to be in sufficient time for students to improve before the mock examinations.

In all cases where the number of GCSE entries is reduced, the pupil will do work in the extra time made available which aids improvement elsewhere. She will not be allowed just to do homework. The Learning Mentor/SENCo will oversee the provision of additional or compensatory work and will monitor the arrangements. A sixth form student who drops a subject will be expected to take up other areas of study, community service or work experience as appropriate. The process will be monitored by the Head of Sixth Form, Work Experience Co-ordinator and SENCO.

Changing a subject/subjects at Advanced Level

This is likewise a decision which requires consideration and advice. It must not be taken by the student by herself or in conjunction only with the teachers of the subject it is proposed to drop or change to. The Deputy Head must be consulted as well as the Head of Sixth Form so that the implications are fully considered and the possibilities examined. It is not always possible to transfer a student to another group. Equal opportunities issues may arise if subsequent requests from other students cannot also be met.

The student must continue to attend all lessons in the originally agreed courses until such time as Head of Sixth Form has ascertained that a move is desirable and possible and parents have been consulted. These changes will normally take place within the first three weeks of the sixth form course. The Exams Officer, School Office and Data Manager are advised at this point.

Subject changes during this period do not initiate the stages of the adapted curriculum framework described above.

Appendix A

Reduced Timetable Monitoring (school process)

1. Head of House or Head of Sixth Form informs the School Office to amend the student's timetable in SIMS [will appear as Study Time (ST) on the timetable], and ensure the Attendance Officer is aware of timetable changes.
2. SENCO creates an alternative provision for extra non-contact periods and will update any Learning Passport as necessary.
 - Student will be based in the library for Study Time unless an alternative provision has been agreed. Library staff will monitor attendance.
 - Any student with SEND will see the SENCO during one of the extra non-contact lessons for individualised support.
3. Short term monitoring:
 - Library staff inform the SENCO if a student does not turn up for sessions.
 - SENCO reviews work being completed by the student.
 - Half termly review at Pastoral Plus meetings by SENCO with Head of House and Head of Sixth Form.
4. Long term monitoring:
 - Data Manager for an overview of subject results.
 - Head of House / Head of Sixth Form for emotional well-being.