

Al Yasmina Academy

Secondary Curriculum Policy

Policy reviewed on:	1 st February 2023
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Lead professional:	Samantha Pyper

Rationale

At Al Yasmina we understand that our curriculum is the most powerful piece of cultural architecture, ultimately responsible for creating the values and attributes of the next generation of leaders. Therefore, we ensure that our curriculum instills a pervasive sense of curiosity in our students; they are always encouraged to be intellectually playful; to be fluent and flexible thinkers who are evolutionary or revolutionary in their engagement with the substantive knowledge taught in lessons. Students at our academy are always guaranteed access to their desired next steps in life because of the carefully crafted curriculum pathways which adapt to suit the needs of our changing cohorts; the trends of evolving global dynamics, as well as the UAE's national agenda.

Every student at the Academy is presented with the opportunity to discover, flourish, and grow their talents through the medium of sport, academia, or the arts. The extended curriculum fosters a competitive spirit through the wide range of competitions our ECA program provides. At Al Yasmina our curriculum encourages students to give back to their communities and to create and participate in projects that are of importance to the local community and to the wider world they inhabit. Are alumni unfailingly secure entrance to some of best universities in the world – we know that the education they receive is shaping wider research and global trends in a myriad of different fields.

The Aim of the Curriculum at AYA

We aim to provide a curriculum that:

1. Is based around the English National Curriculum but is not bound by it.
2. Adheres to the UAE's curriculum requirements and encompasses the countries national agenda initiatives at the heart of its planning.
3. Provides pupils with challenge and a sense of achievement.
4. Provides continuity, progression of learning and differentiation
5. Builds confidence and gives satisfaction and enjoyment, thereby giving pupils a positive attitude to learning.
6. Implicitly and explicitly builds the skills of creativity, innovation and collaboration through the delivery of 21st century learning skills.
7. Provides opportunities for pupils to develop their independent thinking and learning enabling pupils to grow in their understanding of knowledge of concepts, acquiring subject specific skills and develop the ability to choose and apply these in relevant situations both inside and outside the classroom.
8. Provides enrichment and support through provision of additional activities such as educational visits, visiting speakers, field trips etc. ** please see the Extra Curricular policy for further details.*
9. Provides students with opportunities and links to the world of work through a bespoke Careers Curriculum ** please see the draft Careers Curriculum policy for further details.*

Procedures

Curriculum content and delivery:

Content

We follow the English National Curriculum. Progression between and across topics and stages follows the assessment objectives of the ENC. These pathways then lead to KS4 GCSE examinations and AS/A Level, IAS and IAL examinations in Post 16.

MOE requirements are followed in the delivery of the MOE curriculum. Students are taught Arabic, Islamic Studies, and Moral Education from Years 7 to 13 and Social Studies (up to year 10).

To ensure that an ample amount of guided learning hours are available across both the MOE and ENC, the timetable and structure of lessons must remain flexible, innovative and creative.

Ability Setting

All children are taught in a mixture of ability sets. Some subjects such as Maths, set students earlier on in key stage 3 while other subjects such as English teach in mixed groups till students begin their GCSE course. Smaller groups are created if support is required. "A" Level option groups are also considerably smaller given the degree of subject choices at these stages.

Subject lesson allocation

The school functions on a 32-period week, Periods are 50 minutes in length and there are 7 lessons a day Monday -Thursday. On Friday, to accommodate for the early finish in the UAE, there are 4 50 min

lessons and an extended tutor time. This academic year, to support the middle school, primary and secondary school days are aligned.

For further information on the structure of the school’s curriculum please see the Secondary Curriculum Booklet - https://www.canva.com/design/DAFM-pNaz5w/0kxDw97X-SIWegT8mxnu4g/view?utm_content=DAFM-pNaz5w&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

Curriculum Design & Options

Secondary covers Key Stages 3, 4 and Sixth Form

	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Sixth Form
AGE (YRS)	11 - 14	14 - 16	16 - 18
YEAR GROUP	Year 7 to 9	Year 10 to 11	Year 12 to 13
EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS	Pupils choose options to study at IGCSE	IGCSE Exams. Pupils choose options to study at A Level	AS & A2 Exams

The Middle School Curriculum (year 6 & 7 22-23)

The Primary School is situated on the same physical site and provides the Secondary School with most of its intake. The implementation of a Middle School Curriculum has taken away the need for specific transition activities and replaced these with purposeful and continuous opportunities to teach and learn across both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. Lessons are aligned and teachers work in partnership to teach lessons. In core subjects year 6 teachers are assigned to secondary teachers and they deliver one lesson a week together to students in year 7. For students in year 6, their class teachers work with secondary specialists in Art, D&T , Drama and Food & Nutrition to deliver specialist lessons in the secondary classrooms. This is in its first year of implementation.

YEARS 7 – 8 (KEY STAGE 3)

In years 7 and 8 there is a strong commitment to developing a wider and deeper understanding of individual subjects. What is most exciting about years 7 & 8 is that students receive instruction in individual subjects as part of their timetable, such as Music, Art & Drama. They also can try their hand at creating products in Design and Technology as well as conduct experiments in our science labs. In the Humanities subjects they engage with physical, environmental, and human geography while debating the causes and outcomes of the key events that shaped the world as we know it in History.

At Yasmina year 9 is counted as the start of KS4, it acts as a transitional year from KS3 to KS4. After two years of trying out eight new subjects (this is in addition to the core) students can pick out the subjects they enjoyed the most as well as choose between a range of advanced subjects such as Business & Economics, Psychology, PE Exam, Computer Science, Media Studies and Spanish to study in further detail.

These are called ‘options’ subjects and these make up the potential list of subjects that a student can choose to obtain a GCSE qualification in. At the end of year 9 and again for the first two weeks of year

10, students are given a chance to 're-opt' essentially finalize the subjects they want to pursue at GCSE. We call this the transition year because students are given the freedom to try out new subjects and learn skills involved in mastering these subjects, without missing any content if they do decide to pick up different choices in Year 9 & 10.

Pupils are spoken to regarding the options available for them to study in KS4 through assemblies, within subjects and now through the dedicated Careers and Further Education Coordinator. This programme is managed by the Assistant Principal, the Careers and Further Education Coordinator with the support of the KS3 and 4 Leaders.

At the end of Term 2, for students in year 8, an Options Evening is hosted where the KS4 curriculum is introduced to parents. Parents and pupils have the opportunity to meet with subject teachers to discuss their child's suitability for individual subjects at I/GCSE level. Pupils are steered into appropriate subjects by senior staff. Checks are made against pupils' future plans. Students have the opportunity to refine their choices at the end of term 2 in year 9, ready for their I/GCSE course.

THE GCSE YEARS - YEAR 10 & 11

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) are the most rigorous, reliable, and highly regarded examinations available for students in this age bracket. These are externally assessed qualifications that students take at the end of Year 11. This is a two-year course, meaning that the content for each subject lasts over two years with multiple examinations taken for each subject at the end of it.

Students are taught by subject specialists and OFQAL guided learning hours of 120 min per subject form the minimum number of minutes per week. In non-core subjects, students receive a 150 min a week and in core up to 200 min a week.

Students can take a maximum of 10 GCSEs with either Pearson Edexcel, AQA or Cambridge examination boards. Most students are required to study English Language and English Literature, Mathematics, at least double award Science. In addition, they have a certain freedom to choose which subjects they prefer and feel will be the most useful for their future career. Further options, such as Business Studies, Economics, Geography, Psychology and History are available at this stage.

Examinations are taken towards the end of Year 11; we do not encourage early entry, but this is dependent on pupil's ability and subject choices. Second Language Arabic students take GCSE Arabic at the end of Year 10.

Mock exams are completed at the end of Term 1 in Year 11 to support their understanding of the examination process.

For further details please see the GCSE options booklet: [AYA Prospectus 2022-23 Year 9-10.pdf \(22-23\)](#)

THE A LEVELS – YEARS 12 & 13

Also referred to as Post 16, these are the last two years of a student's learning journey which culminate in the most rigorous assessments in the secondary school system – the Advanced Levels. Here, the rationale is that students choose three subjects to pursue, ideally in an area that they would like to

take further at university. With fewer subjects, the depth of content delivered at this level is much closer to what a student will experience at university. Please see our Post 16 Options Booklet <https://tinyurl.com/AYA-Post-16-Prospectus>

Gaining entry to the 6th Form

The requirements for entry into Years 12 and 13, are normally only open to those students with at least five I/GCSEs at grades 9-4 and based on our policy. The requirement for Equivalency is 5 subjects at a 3 (inc English, Maths, any two Sciences and 1 other from the Ministry approved list of subjects), students who fulfil these criteria are supported with access pathways, including I/GCSE resit options, paired with an AS and / or A Level subject.

Support

In Term 1 of Year 11 students are provided with the Sixth Form Options Booklet and a Careers Programme to help pupils and parents make informed choices regarding potential option choices for KS5. This includes individual interviews with our Head of Post 16 and members of staff, offering them individualized careers advice. Provisional choices allow us to generate option blocks that largely reflect the demands of the cohort and previous patterns.

Final option decisions are not made until the publication of GCSE results in August.

Students have the ability to change their options choices in the 1st two weeks of term 1 in Post 16.

Extra-Curricular

In 2021-2022 the school revised its ECA programme ensuring that it is competitive, fun and fosters a wide range of opportunities for our students to honor their local heritage, gain national and internal recognition and obtain complimentary qualifications.

We offer a range of after school and lunchtime extracurricular activities which pupils can participate in. This programme of extra-curricular activities is offered 3 days a week, Tuesday – Thursday afternoons and lunchtimes, to all pupils in Years 7-13. All staff are involved in this process and information is published to parents and students.

Please see the link to the ECA [Policy](#) and [booklet](#).

Policy: https://aldaracademies-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/msaleem_alyasminaacademy_sch_ae/EbKtId7YQbI0kQCOpkRjL2MBWcsOSgwBAyNVtQmtFHYyUw?e=HEG0to

Booklet: https://aldaracademies-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/msaleem_alyasminaacademy_sch_ae/EbvZa6WGC DRGqxI5hs5QxUYBj0IMcQLT_kwIVU8brYY1WA?e=1vJQGA

EAL

While Oracy and listening skills are taught within the English curriculum, literacy is taught across the school as is numeracy, which is taught within the Maths curriculum . As with literacy, these skills are

reinforced across all subjects.

To adapt to the changing population of the school, there has been a large body of work dedicated to raising the skill set of every teacher to that of an EAL teacher so that all students are provided for:

Please see the link to the EAL policy here: [EAL Policy.pdf](#)

Differentiation

We are not a selective school and so there is a wide range of abilities within each cohort. Departments are expected to make provision for this within department schemes of work and staff are expected to take this into account in their teaching, to encompass the variety of talents and needs present in their classroom.

Seating plans which display a range of data on each student have been introduced to support this further and ensure that every child is catered for individually, in each lesson.

Please see the T&L Policy: [Teaching and Learning Policy 2021 - 2022.pdf](#)

Homework

The expectation from the school is that all home learning is completed each week by each student. The range of tasks may include:

- Guided revision
- Extended writing
- Research (recommended websites provided)
- Flipped learning – students preparing work to present to peers
- Pre-learning content
- Quizzes
- Completing tasks using online platforms e.g. GCSE POD/Century
- Creating a model/diagram/drawing to depict or consolidate learning

Please see the link for further details - [Home Learning Policy 2022-23.docx](#)

Careers Education

The Careers and Further Education Coordinator does the following:

- In Year 7, 8 & 9 generates the awareness of different types of careers so that GCSE options choices are better informed.
- In Year 10, organizes work experience weeks along with the Head of Year.
- In Year 11, provides 1:1 sessions with students and parents to explore choices and suitable pathways.
- In the Sixth Form – all of the above as well as University application and scholarship support
- Supports the school's alignment and provision of the Gatsby Benchmarks

For further information please see the [AYA - Careers and HE Policy live.docx](#)

Opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life

The curriculum and wider school experience encourages pupils to acquire skills essential for adult life. Students are encouraged to take on student leadership roles in the form of house captains, Prefects or acting as representatives on the student council.

Our senior students in Sixth Form are able to nominate themselves to positions of responsibility including Head Boy and Head Girl.