

ST DOMINIC'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY

*EYFS to Sixth Form***Academic year 2026–27**

Document control	Details
Policy owner	Headmaster
Approved by	Governing Body
Approval date	September 2026
Effective from	1 September 2026
Review cycle	Annual, and sooner if requirements change
Next review	August 2027
Applies to	All pupils, EYFS to Sixth Form
Status	Whole-school policy

This policy is to be read with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection, SEND, Accessibility, Assessment, PSHE/RSHE, Careers, Educational Visits, Online Safety, Equality and Admissions policies.

1. Policy statement

St Dominic's Grammar School provides a broad, balanced, coherent and ambitious curriculum from EYFS to Sixth Form. It reflects the School's Christian ethos and its commitment to educating mind, body and spirit. The curriculum is designed to secure strong knowledge, understanding and skills; promote personal development and wellbeing; remove barriers to participation; and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.

The curriculum is suitable for pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and is supported by written plans and schemes of work. English is the principal language of instruction. Teaching takes account of pupils' starting points and is adapted so that all pupils can make good progress.

For 2026–27 this policy has been rebuilt against the Independent School Standards, the April 2026 standards guidance, the EYFS statutory framework, KCSIE 2026, the revised RSHE guidance in force from September 2026 and the current ISI inspection framework.

2. Aims

- provide full-time supervised education of a quality appropriate to each pupil's age, ability, aptitude and needs;
- establish secure foundations in speaking, listening, literacy, reading, writing and numeracy, with systematic synthetic phonics for pupils at the early stages of learning to read;
- develop subject knowledge through a logically sequenced curriculum with clear end points and purposeful connections between subjects;
- enable pupils to think critically and creatively, solve problems, communicate confidently, work collaboratively and become increasingly independent learners;
- promote physical, social, emotional, cultural, moral and spiritual development, character, resilience and respect;
- ensure that pupils understand safeguarding, healthy relationships, consent, online risk, misinformation and how to seek help;
- promote respect for people with the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and uphold the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance;
- provide impartial careers education and guidance so pupils can make informed choices at key transition points; and
- prepare pupils for future study, employment, economic wellbeing, citizenship and adult life.

3. Scope and status

This policy applies to all curriculum provision, including lessons, assemblies, tutor time, enrichment, educational visits, external speakers, remote or digital learning, work-related learning and co-curricular activity where it forms part of the planned educational programme. Detailed subject content, timetables and qualification choices are published separately and may change annually.

Where a pupil is temporarily educated off site or by an alternative provider, the School remains responsible for the suitability, safety, oversight and review of the provision. Any such arrangement must follow safeguarding, attendance and commissioning procedures and be approved by the Headmaster or delegated senior leader.

4. Legal and regulatory framework

The policy has regard, where applicable, to:

- the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, especially Schedule 1, Parts 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8;
- Department for Education, The independent school standards: guidance for independent schools (April 2026);

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (current version);
- the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (current version applicable during 2026–27);
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance (revised guidance effective 1 September 2026);
- the Equality Act 2010; Children and Families Act 2014; SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years; Human Rights Act 1998; and Education Act 1996;
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales and guidance on political impartiality in schools; and
- the current ISI inspection framework and handbook for association independent schools.

5. Governance, leadership and responsibilities

Role	Core responsibilities
Proprietor and Governing Body	Ensure that the Independent School Standards and other applicable requirements are met; approve this policy; assure themselves that curriculum leadership, safeguarding, equality, resources and staffing are effective; receive evidence of impact and challenge leaders where improvement is required.
Headmaster	Set the curriculum vision; ensure implementation across EYFS to Sixth Form; deploy suitably qualified staff and resources; approve material changes; ensure statutory and examination requirements are met; report to the Proprietor and Governing Body.
Senior curriculum leaders	Translate the policy into phase and subject plans; maintain coherent sequencing; monitor provision and outcomes; ensure literacy, numeracy, SEND, safeguarding, RSHE, careers and equality expectations are integrated; coordinate transitions and staff development.
DSL	Advise on safeguarding content and emerging risks; help ensure a preventative curriculum, safe external speakers and appropriate response to disclosures; work with curriculum leaders on online safety, harmful content and contextual safeguarding.
EYFS lead	Implement the EYFS framework; assure the quality of the educational programmes, assessment and transition; support key persons and practitioners; liaise with the DSL and SENCO.
SENCO	Coordinate identification, assess-plan-do-review arrangements, reasonable adjustments and specialist advice; support adaptive teaching and transition; monitor pupils with SEND and report on the impact of provision.
Subject/department leaders	Maintain up-to-date schemes, end points and assessment approaches; assure subject expertise, resources and inclusive provision; review pupils' work and progress; address gaps and report to senior leaders.
Teachers and practitioners	Know pupils and starting points; plan and teach coherently; adapt without lowering ambition; assess accurately; promote literacy, numeracy, safeguarding and respectful conduct; record and act on concerns; communicate with parents.
Pupils	Engage, work safely, respect others, take increasing responsibility for learning, contribute views and seek help when needed.
Parents and carers	Support attendance and learning, share relevant information, engage with reports and consultation, and raise questions through the appropriate channels.

6. Curriculum design principles

- Ambitious and inclusive: the same high expectations apply to all, with adaptations, reasonable adjustments and support that enable access and participation.
- Coherent and sequenced: plans identify what pupils should know, understand and be able to do, and build cumulatively from prior learning towards defined end points.
- Knowledge-rich and skills-conscious: secure subject knowledge supports reasoning, creativity, communication and application; generic skills are taught through meaningful subject content.
- Responsive but stable: leaders use evidence, assessment and pupil needs to refine provision without creating unnecessary change or overload.
- Developmentally appropriate: pedagogy, content, resources and independence evolve from play-based EYFS learning through to advanced Sixth Form study.
- Ethically and culturally broad: pupils encounter a range of voices and perspectives, learn to evaluate evidence and are prepared to participate respectfully in a diverse society.
- Safe: curriculum planning anticipates safeguarding, age-appropriateness, emotional impact, online content, practical hazards and the needs of vulnerable pupils.

7. Required breadth and statutory expectations

Across the School, the planned curriculum provides experience in the areas below. These are delivered through discrete subjects and well-judged cross-curricular work; they are not required to appear as separate timetable labels at every age.

Area	School expectation
Linguistic	Speaking, listening, reading and writing in English; opportunities to use and appreciate language; modern foreign language provision appropriate to phase.
Mathematical	Number, calculation, algebraic and spatial understanding, data, reasoning, problem solving and financial capability.
Scientific	Knowledge and understanding of the natural, physical and material world; observation, hypothesis, experimentation, evaluation and safe practical work.
Technological	Computing and digital literacy; design and making; safe, responsible and critical use of technology, media and AI-enabled tools.
Human and social	Understanding people, societies, institutions, geography, history, economics and the environment, including respect for protected characteristics.
Physical	Physical development, health, fitness, teamwork, safe participation and opportunities for competitive and non-competitive activity.
Aesthetic and creative	Art, design, music, drama and other opportunities to create, perform, respond, interpret and appreciate.
Personal and social	Age-appropriate PSHE and RSHE, safeguarding, citizenship, economic wellbeing, careers, character, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The curriculum actively promotes the fundamental British values and does not undermine them. Partisan political views are not promoted in teaching or other planned activities. Where political issues are brought to pupils' attention, staff take reasonably practicable steps to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views, appropriate to age and context.

8. Phase curriculum

8.1 EYFS

In EYFS, a secure, welcoming and language-rich environment combines purposeful play, adult-guided learning, direct teaching and responsive interactions. Practitioners follow children's interests and needs while ensuring progressive educational programmes across the seven areas of learning and development.

Prime areas	Specific areas
Communication and language Physical development Personal, social and emotional development	Literacy Mathematics Understanding the world Expressive arts and design

The characteristics of effective teaching and learning—playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically—inform provision. Assessment is proportionate and based on ongoing observation and professional knowledge. The progress check at age two and the EYFS Profile are completed where applicable. Parents are partners in learning, and transition into Year 1 is carefully planned.

8.2 Prep: Key Stages 1 and 2

The Prep curriculum secures strong foundations and breadth. Early reading is taught through a systematic synthetic phonics programme for pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read, supported by decodable books and regular assessment. English, mathematics and science form a strong core, complemented by humanities, religious education, computing, modern foreign languages, creative and performing arts, PE,

PSHE/RSHE and enrichment. Teaching develops fluency, vocabulary, handwriting, reasoning, curiosity and independence.

8.3 Senior: Key Stage 3

Key Stage 3 deepens subject knowledge and broadens pupils' intellectual and cultural experience.

Programmes are sequenced to provide a secure platform for later study without narrowing prematurely to examination specifications. Pupils receive guidance on study habits, digital and information literacy, healthy relationships, careers awareness and subject choices.

8.4 Senior: Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4, pupils follow a core programme that includes English, mathematics and science, together with selected examination subjects and continued PE, PSHE/RSHE, religious education, careers and personal development. The annual options process provides impartial information and guidance, considers pupils' aspirations and needs, and makes clear that particular subjects may depend on demand, staffing, timetable viability and awarding-body requirements. The current offer is published in the options information, not fixed by this policy.

8.5 Sixth Form

The Sixth Form offers coherent programmes of advanced academic and/or applied study, alongside tutorial provision, PSHE/RSHE, careers guidance, enrichment, community contribution and preparation for independent adult life. Programmes are matched to pupils' prior attainment, aspirations and destinations. Academic mentoring, supervised and independent study, research skills and opportunities such as the Extended Project Qualification may be provided as appropriate. The current subject and qualification offer is set out in the Sixth Form prospectus.

9. Teaching and learning

Teaching is founded on strong subject and phase knowledge and an evidence-informed understanding of how pupils learn. No single teaching method is prescribed. Teachers select approaches that best serve the intended learning and the pupils in front of them.

- identify clear learning intentions and draw on pupils' starting points and prior knowledge;
- explain, model, question and provide practice so pupils can remember, understand and apply important content;
- teach vocabulary, reading, writing and oracy explicitly within subjects;
- use checks for understanding and feedback to correct misconceptions and guide next steps;
- adapt explanations, tasks, resources, grouping and support while maintaining appropriate challenge;
- provide purposeful opportunities for practical work, discussion, creativity, independent work and collaboration;
- manage time and behaviour effectively and use resources, including technology, safely and well;
- help pupils connect new learning to prior knowledge and transfer it to unfamiliar contexts; and
- promote intellectual humility, curiosity, accuracy, perseverance and responsible scholarship.

10. Literacy, reading, numeracy and digital capability

10.1 Literacy and reading

Every teacher contributes to literacy. Subject leaders identify disciplinary vocabulary, reading and writing demands. Pupils read widely for knowledge, fluency and pleasure. Those who struggle are identified promptly and receive structured support whose impact is reviewed. Early reading provision follows the expectations in section 8.2.

10.2 Numeracy

Mathematical fluency and reasoning are developed through mathematics and reinforced consistently in relevant subjects. Staff use agreed conventions and provide targeted support where gaps limit access to the wider curriculum.

10.3 Digital, media and AI literacy

Pupils learn to use digital technologies safely, legally, critically and creatively. Teaching covers privacy, security, online relationships, misinformation, persuasive design, algorithmic influence, intellectual property and appropriate use of generative AI. AI-assisted work must follow School rules, protect personal data, acknowledge assistance where required and never replace the pupil's own thinking or breach examination regulations.

11. Inclusion, equality and additional needs

Curriculum access is an entitlement. The School uses the graduated approach and reasonable adjustments to anticipate and remove barriers. Decisions are informed by the pupil, parents, teachers, the SENCO and, where appropriate, external specialists. Support is designed to increase independence and participation and is reviewed for impact.

Need or context	Curriculum response
SEND and disability	High-quality adaptive teaching; accessible resources and environments; reasonable adjustments; targeted or specialist support; access arrangements where criteria are met; coordinated transition.
English as an additional language	Assessment that distinguishes language acquisition from SEND; explicit vocabulary and language support; full access to ambitious content; respect for home languages and cultures.
Higher prior attainment / exceptional potential	Greater depth, complexity, pace and independence; enrichment and wider reading; careful monitoring of engagement and wellbeing; acceleration only where demonstrably appropriate.

Need or context	Curriculum response
Medical, mental health or attendance needs	Coordinated support and proportionate adaptation; continuity during absence where feasible; reintegration plans; liaison with safeguarding and medical leads.
Looked-after, previously looked-after and other vulnerable pupils	High expectations, sensitive planning and timely support; consideration of personal education plans where applicable; avoidance of unnecessary disclosure or stigma.
Protected characteristics	Inclusive examples and resources; prevention of discrimination, harassment and stereotyping; age-appropriate teaching that fosters respect and does not compel pupils to adopt a particular belief.

12. Personal development, RSHE, SMSC and safeguarding

12.1 PSHE and RSHE

A planned, developmental PSHE and RSHE programme is taught from EYFS to Sixth Form. From September 2026 it reflects the revised statutory guidance, is sequenced and age-appropriate, and is responsive to safeguarding evidence and pupils' needs. It includes healthy and respectful relationships, consent, boundaries, online and offline harms, physical and mental health, financial and economic wellbeing, citizenship and preparation for adult life. Detailed content, consultation, parental rights and procedures are set out in the PSHE/RSHE Policy.

Parents have the statutory right to request withdrawal from sex education taught as part of RSE, except for content that forms part of statutory science and subject to the legal position as a pupil approaches age 16. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Requests are handled by the Headmaster under the PSHE/RSHE Policy. Any right of withdrawal from religious education is handled under the School's published arrangements and applicable law.

12.2 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- enable pupils to explore beliefs and values, reflect on meaning and develop self-knowledge without undermining the protected rights of others;
- help pupils distinguish right from wrong, understand civil and criminal law, accept responsibility and contribute positively;
- develop social confidence, cooperation, service, leadership and respect across different communities; and
- broaden cultural knowledge and appreciation through literature, history, languages, arts, faith, sport and engagement with the local and wider world.

12.3 Safeguarding through the curriculum

Safeguarding is embedded, not confined to a single lesson. Curriculum leaders and the DSL review content against patterns of concern, local risk and emerging national issues. Pupils are taught in accessible language how to recognise unsafe situations, challenge harmful behaviour, report concerns and obtain help. Staff remain alert to disclosures or changes in behaviour and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy immediately; they do not investigate concerns themselves.

- Online safety is considered across subjects and technologies, including filters and monitoring, personal data, sexual harassment, image sharing, cybercrime, extremist content and commercially driven harms.
- Sensitive content is planned carefully, with warning and support where appropriate, without withholding information pupils need to stay safe.
- Resources and examples are checked for age-appropriateness, accuracy, bias and accessibility.
- External visitors and speakers are risk assessed, supervised as necessary and briefed on the School's safeguarding, equality and political impartiality expectations.

13. Careers and preparation for adult life

All secondary-age pupils receive access to up-to-date, impartial careers guidance that enables informed choices and encourages fulfilment of potential. Provision includes encounters with education, training and employment pathways; curriculum links to careers; development of employability and financial capability; application and interview support; and individual guidance at key decision points. Advice is not biased towards a particular institution, qualification or route. Work experience or workplace encounters are planned and safeguarded under the Careers and Work Experience Policy.

14. Enrichment, visits and co-curricular learning

Educational visits, clubs, competitions, performances, service, leadership, sport and cultural experiences extend learning and widen participation. Activities have explicit educational value, appropriate risk assessment and safeguarding, reasonable adjustments and clear links to the School's aims. No pupil is excluded unlawfully because of disability or another protected characteristic. Charging and remission arrangements are applied consistently.

15. Assessment, reporting and progression

Assessment is an integral part of curriculum design and teaching. It is proportionate, valid for its purpose and used to improve learning rather than generate unnecessary workload.

Purpose	Expected practice
Diagnostic	Establish starting points, prior knowledge and barriers; inform planning and support.
Formative	Check understanding during and after teaching; give timely feedback; adapt teaching and help pupils act on next steps.
Summative	Evaluate attainment at appropriate points against taught content and defined standards; support reporting, transition and curriculum review.
Statutory / external	Complete required EYFS and public examination processes; observe awarding-body and access-arrangement rules; maintain exam security and integrity.
Reporting	Give parents and pupils clear, accurate information about attainment, progress, learning behaviours and priorities; provide opportunities to discuss progress.
Review	Use patterns in assessment—alongside work, lesson evidence, attendance and pupil voice—to identify strengths, gaps, groups requiring support and curriculum improvements.

Targets and predicted grades are aids to planning and guidance, not ceilings. Leaders consider the reliability and limitations of assessment information and avoid drawing conclusions from a single measure.

16. Homework, independent study and resources

Homework and independent study consolidate, practise, prepare or extend learning. Expectations are age-appropriate, purposeful, accessible and coordinated to avoid excessive workload. Sixth Form pupils are expected to develop disciplined independent study habits. Where digital access creates a barrier, staff arrange a reasonable alternative or support route.

Resources are sufficient, safe, current and accessible. Texts and media are selected for educational value and considered in context; encountering challenging ideas is not in itself a reason for exclusion, but teachers plan for maturity, safeguarding, equality and the avoidance of gratuitous harm. Library and digital resources promote broad reading and research literacy.

17. Curriculum planning and change control

The curriculum is expressed through this policy, annual curriculum maps, subject schemes, phase plans, timetables, options/prospectus information and assessment frameworks. Plans identify end points, sequence,

essential knowledge and vocabulary, assessment opportunities, adaptations and resources. Operational plans may be revised during the year when evidence shows this will improve provision.

A material curriculum change—such as removing a phase, core area, qualification pathway or significant teaching time—requires a written proposal to the Headmaster. The proposal considers regulatory compliance, safeguarding, equality impact, SEND, staffing, resources, timetabling, examination continuity, pupil and parent communication, and transition. The Headmaster decides whether Proprietor or Governing Body approval is required under the School's scheme of delegation.

18. Monitoring, evaluation and improvement

Monitoring is proportionate and triangulated. It focuses on what pupils learn and experience, not compliance with a preferred lesson format. Leaders may draw on:

- curriculum and scheme reviews; learning visits and professional dialogue; work and assessment sampling;
- progress, participation, attendance, behaviour and destination information, considered carefully for individuals and groups;
- pupil, parent and staff voice, including the experience of pupils with SEND or other vulnerabilities;
- quality assurance of EYFS, RSHE, careers, online safety, literacy, assessment and examination provision;
- professional development, subject expertise and resource audits; and
- external examination, inspection and specialist feedback.

Findings lead to clear actions, named responsibility, support, timescales and follow-up. The Headmaster reports at least annually to the Proprietor and Governing Body on curriculum compliance, quality, inclusion, safeguarding integration, outcomes and improvement priorities.

19. Information for parents, pupils and staff

The School makes available the required particulars of its curriculum and other information under the Independent School Standards. Parents receive accessible information about the curriculum, subject choices, assessment and reporting, PSHE/RSHE consultation and how to raise concerns. Staff can access current controlled policies and plans. Pupils receive age-appropriate explanations of expectations, choices and support.

20. Concerns, complaints and review

Curriculum questions should normally be raised first with the relevant teacher, tutor, subject leader or phase leader. Formal complaints follow the School's Complaints Policy. Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The policy is reviewed annually and sooner following legal or statutory change, significant curriculum change, safeguarding learning, inspection findings or evidence that it is not operating effectively.

Appendix 1 — Independent School Standards curriculum assurance map

Requirement	How this policy addresses it	Primary evidence retained
Written curriculum policy, plans and schemes	Sections 1, 6, 7, 8 and 17	Approved policy; phase/subject maps; schemes; timetables
Full-time supervised education and required areas	Sections 3 and 7	Timetables; staffing; curriculum maps; visit/alternative provision records
Speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy	Sections 2, 7 and 10	Phonics and reading evidence; subject plans; assessments; intervention reviews

Requirement	How this policy addresses it	Primary evidence retained
PSHE; respect for protected characteristics; SMSC and British values	Sections 2, 7, 11 and 12	PSHE/RSHE scheme; equality review; assemblies; pupil voice; resources
Secondary careers guidance	Section 13	Careers programme; individual guidance; encounters; destination evidence
Suitable for age, aptitude and needs, including SEND	Sections 6, 8, 9 and 11	Pupil profiles; reasonable adjustments; provision plans; work and progress evidence
English as principal language	Section 1	Timetables; subject plans; EAL support records
No partisan promotion; balanced political issues	Section 7	Plans/resources; external speaker checks; staff guidance
Effective preparation for adult life	Sections 2, 8, 12–14	RSHE/careers plans; Sixth Form programme; enrichment and destination data
Teaching enables progress and uses suitable assessment	Sections 9 and 15	Lesson/work evidence; assessment records; reports; curriculum reviews
Leadership and proprietor oversight	Sections 5 and 18	Minutes; reports; action plans; training and audit evidence

Appendix 2 — Annual curriculum assurance checklist

Check	Owner	Evidence / date
Curriculum offer remains broad, balanced, suitable and compliant from EYFS to Sixth Form	Headmaster / curriculum lead	
Schemes identify end points, sequencing, assessment, literacy and adaptations	Subject and phase leaders	
EYFS educational programmes and assessment match the current statutory framework	EYFS lead	
KCSIE 2026 risks and DSL intelligence are reflected in planned safeguarding education	DSL / PSHE lead	
RSHE provision matches the revised guidance effective September 2026 and consultation records are current	PSHE/RSHE lead	
Early reading and phonics provision is coherent and effective	Prep lead / literacy lead	
SEND, accessibility, equality and EAL barriers are identified and addressed	SENCO / senior leader	
Careers guidance is impartial, current and available to all secondary pupils	Careers lead	
Political impartiality and external speaker controls are understood and applied	Headmaster / DSL	
Assessment, progress, pupil voice and participation evidence informs improvement	Senior and subject leaders	
Parents and pupils can access current curriculum and options information	Headmaster / website owner	
Proprietor and Governing Body have received assurance and tracked actions	Chair / Headmaster	

Key reference documents

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended).
- Department for Education, The independent school standards: guidance for independent schools (April 2026).
- Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026).
- Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance (revised guidance effective 1 September 2026).
- Department for Education, Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (version applicable in 2026–27).
- Department for Education and Department of Health, SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Equality Act 2010 and associated schools guidance.
- Independent Schools Inspectorate, current inspection framework and handbook.