



## **A Level Curriculum**

### **Curriculum Rationale**

We are extremely proud of the breadth of curriculum we are able to offer in the Sixth Form, which provides our students considerable choice of subject and flexibility in terms of which subjects to continue with in Year 13.

At KEVI Camp Hill School for Girls, all students choose **four subjects** to study from the start of Year 12. Most students will drop down to three subjects in Year 13 when the work is inevitably more challenging. A small number of students continue to study four A Levels into Year 13, but this is dependent on academic outcomes at the end of Year 12. There are a number of reasons that students start four A Levels in Year 12:

- Studying 4 subjects in Year 12 gives students a degree of flexibility – there may be a subject they are doing less well in, or are not enjoying as much as they thought they would. If students only started 3 subjects, it would mean they would *have* to continue with all of them, regardless.
- We are still one of only a few local schools that has managed to retain such a broad and balanced curriculum at KS5. Staff and governors are committed to offering subjects such as Music, Art, Drama and Languages (among others) at A Level, so that students have choice. Without these subjects, we would narrow down our students' future options considerably, making our school a far less exciting and diverse place to study.
- Most importantly, our students are entirely capable of studying four A Levels in Year 12. By doing so it promotes academic rigour and allows them to demonstrate their ability to manage a higher workload, in preparation for future careers/courses. It develops skills in organisation, provides structure and allows students to learn about ideas and content beyond their final three A Level choices. There is often cross-over between subjects, for example: History and Government and Politics, where one subject provides wider context that supports the study of another. It also allows staff to write UCAS references that demonstrate students' commitment and interest in a wide range of subjects.

### **Protocol for dropping a subject at the end of Year 12**

It is important that there is a clear protocol for the way in which students are able to drop a subject at the end of Year 12. The following protocol must be followed in order to:

- ensure students are able to make informed decisions having covered a sufficient proportion of the Year 12 courses
- reduce uncertainty and manage student expectations about when subjects might be dropped
- minimise unnecessary administration and additional teacher workload.

### **Spring Term 2 (After February Half Term)**

Year 12 students to make the following decisions:

1. Which subject they are **likely** to drop from the beginning of Year 13 (*note: we need to know this information at this point in time for timetabling purposes and to give us an understanding of staffing needs. This is not set in stone, it is only used as a guide - students may still change their minds, and many do. It is also not a confirmed "drop" once this discussion has taken place.*)
2. Whether they wish to be entered for an AS examination in **one subject**. (Remember not all subjects are able to offer an AS). This is usually an indication of the subject a student will drop, but in some cases students do change their minds at a later date. Students should discuss taking an AS examination with their subject teacher (*note: students are only advised to take an AS qualification if they are likely to gain a high grade, as any AS grade must be declared on UCAS application forms*). Students will sit school end of year summer examinations in all remaining subjects.

### **Following Year 12 Examinations (June)**

- It is the expectation that all students continue with their fourth subject **until the end of the academic year**. However, if following receipt of the summer examination results, students have not performed as well as they had hoped and wish to drop **one** subject at this point, they must:
  - **Discuss their wish to drop a subject with their subject teacher on receipt of examination result**
  - **Discuss their wish to drop a subject with their parents/carers**
  - **Complete a 'Request to drop a subject' form (available from Dr. Rose)**
  - **If agreed then students would stop attending lessons for the chosen subject, and instead use gained time to support study in their remaining three subjects.**
- If a student wishes to continue with four A Levels in Year 13, they must arrange a conversation with their Head of Year, who will discuss the viability of this request by looking at academic outcomes, organisation and attitude to learning across the year. If agreed by their Head of Year, students should complete a **'Request to continue with 4 A Levels'** form, including parents/carers' signatures
- Students must not approach members of staff before receiving their summer exam results to discuss dropping a subject (*see exceptional circumstances below*)
- Once a subject has been dropped, students are not able to change their minds and return to that subject if a period of more than one week has passed
- In *exceptional* circumstances, students may need to drop a subject before receiving their Year 12 summer examination results. This may be due to, for example: an ongoing health condition, a change in family circumstances or a bereavement. In this situation students should speak to their Head of Year in the first instance, following which there would be a discussion with the student's parents/carers. Following the gathering of relevant evidence, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Deputy Head (Curriculum) will make a recommendation to the Head about the request to drop a subject, taking into account any pastoral and/or academic concerns.

### **UCAS predicted grades**

UCAS predicted grades will be decided on by teaching staff in the summer term of Year 12. In order to arrive at the predicted grades, staff will look at students' overall performance when making their decisions, therefore it's vital that students apply themselves and work hard at all times throughout Year 12. Predicted grades will be based on:

- progress made during Year 12
- attitude towards learning during Year 12
- AS exam outcome OR internally set end of year exam outcome
- staff professional judgement.