



**Cokethorpe**  

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**SCHOOL**

# Academic Policy

September 2023

## FOREWORD

This document contains the current Academic Policies of the School and is reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team.

Revision and refinement is sometimes necessary at other times of the year, subject to changes in the curriculum. Where appropriate, the policies are reflected in the Departmental Handbooks. Heads of Department are expected to advise the Director of Studies of any revisions that they feel should be made to the policies.

These policies are accessible to all members of the teaching staff for guidance. A copy of the Academic Policies is available on the School website.

Cokethorpe offers a range of subjects which, while interesting and valuable in their own right, also serve as means of expression and development. The broader the range of subjects we can offer, the greater the chances that a child will find the appropriate means by which to show their ability and so grow as individuals.

Pupils normally sit external exams:

- GCSE
  - Pupils are expected to follow a minimum of five GCSE courses, including Maths and English, to the final exam. Pupils not meeting this stipulation will not normally be allowed to remain at Cokethorpe
  - The School reserves the right to refuse entry to an exam if it is felt that sitting the exam would not be in the best interests of a pupil. This will only be done after consultation with the pupil and parents or guardians
- A Level
  - Depending upon their GCSE profile, students either begin with four or three subjects and are encouraged to carry out an EPQ.
- BTEC
  - For those students for whom the A Level programme is not appropriate, the School offers the Business BTEC qualification. Typically, students would be expected to have a minimum of five 9-4 grades. Whilst the majority of this programme is made up of assessed coursework, there are examined components.

It is assumed that all Fifth Form pupils will want to take up a place in the Sixth Form at Cokethorpe and no application process is required. Following their Mock GCSE Examinations, Fifth Form pupils submit their preferences for study at Sixth Form level. These preferences are then discussed with either the Director of Studies or the Head of Sixth Form and, where appropriate, amendments are made. The School works hard to ensure that pupils make choices that are right for them and reserves the right to decline access to specific courses if specific requirements are not met. Offers of places will be made after this time and in all cases will be based on suitable A Level subject choices as well as performance in the mock GCSE examinations. All offers of Sixth Form places will be conditional on the achievement of appropriate grades in the final GCSE Examinations. The School reserves the right to decline access to Sixth Form if it is considered that a pupil will not contribute positively to the academic culture.

Entry requirements to the Sixth Form:

4 A Level Subjects: Students are expected to have achieved an average of at least 6.5 points in their GCSEs.

3 A Level Subjects: Students are expected to have achieved an average of at least 5.5 points in their GCSEs.

Subject specific requirements for entry onto the A Level programme are outlined in the Sixth Form Information booklet. Students should normally have at least a grade 6 in intended subjects that have already been studied at GCSE. In addition, those students wishing to study Maths at A Level will have at

least a grade 7 at GCSE. Similarly, those wishing to study two or more sciences or one science and Maths will have achieved at least grade 7s at GCSE. Due to the nature of Psychology at A Level students are required to have at least a grade 6 in GCSE Maths.

## CURRICULUM POLICY

The curriculum at Cokethorpe School exists to enable our pupils to make the most of their potential. The curriculum acknowledges the national context and is designed ensure that the education offered by the School is relevant, viable and accessible.

The Cokethorpe Curriculum shares these three main aims with the National Curriculum; to encourage young people to become:

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- Confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society

Each academic department maintains a handbook and current schemes of work.

All pupils study the core subjects of English, Mathematics and the sciences up to GCSE. Up to the end of the Third Form pupils are offered a curriculum which includes the core and a range of humanities, arts, and practical subjects. Two modern languages are taught in the First and Second Forms, with all pupils choosing to study at least one language in the Third Form with a view to continuing that language to GCSE. The most able linguists may choose to continue with two languages in the Third Form and beyond. As pupils enter Third Form, they are required to make some subject choices in order to increase the time allocated to that subject in preparation for GCSE study. Compulsory subjects are: Maths, English, Sciences, History, Geography, Civics and a language. The subjects in the 'choice' pool are: Art, Drama, Design Technology, Latin, Music, Computer Science and PE. With the exception of Latin, it is generally accepted that, with an appropriate audition, pupils will be able to resume these subjects at GCSE should they wish to do so. Cokethorpe School offers subjects that we believe will inspire our pupils and extend to them the means and opportunity to explore and expand their learning capacity. Whilst the range of subjects on offer is constantly under review it will always reflect the need to maintain high academic standards.

In general, subjects are taught in mixed ability groups. In some subjects (Maths and Latin, for instance) Heads of Department do operate some setting, although only on the understanding that pupils may move between sets as appropriate.

During the Third Form pupils are asked to consider the subjects they intend to study at GCSE. All will study English and Mathematics and Science. All pupils should expect to pursue the Separate Science assessment route, until it becomes apparent that this is not in their best interests. Whilst a Modern Language is not compulsory, pupils are encouraged to select at least one. The selection of other subjects will be made after a process of consultation between pupil, parents, teachers, tutors and the Director of Studies. Every effort is made to offer every pupil a suitable range of GCSE subjects in line with their preferences and sensible progression for the future. Not every combination of subjects is possible.

Selection of A Level subjects begins formally in the Fifth Form although younger pupils with a clear idea of their future studies are encouraged to research and seek informal advice from teaching staff, tutors and even possible future universities.

Heads of Department are responsible for assessing which examination boards are appropriate for study at both GCSE and A Level, although any changes must be subject to consultation with the Director of Studies. Decisions to move examination boards must be made as early as possible within an academic year so that appropriate measures can be put in place for preparation thereafter. Heads of Department should inform the Director of Studies of any curriculum changes at GCSE and A Level by the end of the Michaelmas term preceding the September in which it will be introduced.

## HOMEWORK POLICY

### PURPOSE

We want our pupils to live busy, full lives. We want them to thrive academically, but also to appreciate the value of the multitude of opportunities available to them beyond the School environment. We want them to grow up as balanced, self-aware young people, able to engage positively with the world around them.

Homework must serve to enable this vision, not to impede it.

With this in mind, homework at Cokethorpe School is designed to be:

- Useful and relevant, clearly supporting the learning process.
- Time-sensitive and contained, recognising the value of specific, definite tasks.
- Progressive; designed to encourage increased independence as pupils progress through their School careers.

### Our approach

- i) As a general principle, the School expects all children to read for at least 20 minutes a day. This is an integral part of our homework policy because we recognise the crucial link between reading and academic success.
- ii) Subject-specific homework will be set as an Assignment on Teams, and deadlines will be made visible on pupil calendars. A minimum 4-day deadline will be set, enabling pupils the opportunity to exercise good judgement and responsibility in allocating time to enable tasks to be completed properly.
- iii) At the start of each academic year, pupils will receive dedicated guidance on how to manage time and prioritise tasks.
- iv) A graduated approach will be applied so that homework demands increase as children progress through the School.

### Setting high quality homework

The guiding principle for all homework set is that quality is more important than quantity. Homework tasks should never be created as after-thoughts and must never be used to 'finish off' tasks not completed in class unless deliberately designed to do so.

Features of effective homework include:

- i) Clarity of purpose: pupils engage more effectively with tasks when they have a clear understanding of how the task relates to their learning.
- ii) Clarity of expectation: when setting tasks, it is important that pupils are clear what they must do to be successful.
- iii) Achievable challenge: homework that is too challenging (or not challenging enough) is demotivating. Consideration must be given to the way in which all pupils can engage with the task set.
- iv) Activities that will support and enhance classroom learning: this might include retrieval practice to embed deeper learning, deliberate practice to consolidate discipline-specific learning or reading to prepare for a particular class-based discussion.
- v) Quality feedback: pupils need to have feedback on the extent to which their efforts have, or have not, met the requirements of the task set.

## HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS

**First Form:** All pupils are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a day. Alongside this, pupils will have compulsory homework set in Maths and English (once a week), MFL, Latin and Science (once a fortnight). In the Lent Term, History, Geography and Art homework will be added (in general, once a fortnight). Homework will be set when appropriate, not according to a specific timetable, and, with the exception of Mathematics, each piece should last no more than half an hour.

From the start of the Lent term a range of 'optional' homework tasks will be available for pupils to complete in Design Technology, Drama, Computer Science and Music. There is no expectation that pupils will complete all these tasks, but they are encouraged to exercise judgement, responsibility and ambition in making this decision.

**Second Form:** All pupils are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a day. Alongside this, pupils will have compulsory homework set in Maths and English (once a week), and MFL, Science, History, Geography, Art, and Latin (once a fortnight). Homework will be set when appropriate, not according to a specific timetable, and, with the exception of Mathematics, each piece should last no more than half an hour.

Throughout the year, a range of 'optional' homework tasks will be available for pupils to complete in Design Technology, Drama, Computer Science and Music. There is no expectation that pupils will complete all these tasks, but they are encouraged to exercise judgement, responsibility and ambition in making this decision.

**Third Form:** All pupils are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a day. Alongside this, pupils will have compulsory homework set in Maths and English (once a week), and MFL, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History and Geography (once a fortnight). Homework will be set when appropriate, not according to a specific timetable, and, with the exception of Mathematics, each piece should last no more than half an hour.

Throughout the year, pupils will also be expected to complete homework in their 'optional' subjects, gradually increasing the amount of homework they have in preparation for GCSE study.

**Fourth and Fifth Form:** All pupils are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a day. Alongside this, pupils will have compulsory homework set in Maths and English, the Sciences and their 'optional' subjects (once a week, if appropriate). The time allocated for these tasks will vary depending upon their nature.

**Sixth Form:** Independent learning is an integral part of Sixth Form life and the expectation is that students complete 10 hours per subject per fortnight in addition to their directed study. Some of this time will be spent completing homework set by the class teacher, but departments should aim to explicitly teach students how they might use their time productively.

Sixth Form students should be encouraged to recognise the difference between 'Homework' and 'Study'. The former relates to tasks that are explicitly set by their teacher, whilst the latter relates to more general activity that could be said to enrich and extend learning and understanding. Students should not limit themselves to the completion of set tasks only.

Where possible, deadlines for large pieces of work (EPQs, NEAs etc.) should be shared on the 'Sixth Form Academic Calendar', enabling expectations to be managed.

### **Expectations of pupils**

Part of the purpose of homework is to begin the process of learning how to manage time effectively. This will be easier for some than others, and the job of Tutor is to support those who find it most challenging. The general expectation is that pupils will complete homework to the best of their ability within the time frame allocated. Where pupils travel significant distances to attend School, or where they have significant extra-curricular activities that take place in the evenings, they are encouraged to make use of Study as an option through the AOB programme.

Homework offers an excellent opportunity for pupils to showcase the School's leadership traits:

- **Ambition:** Completing tasks to the best of their ability, taking on 'optional' tasks as and when possible.
- **Judgement:** Deciding upon priorities and planning in order to meet deadlines.
- **Integrity:** Doing what is right for their development as learners.
- **Responsibility:** Completing tasks on time and in the appropriate way.

- **Courage:** Having a go at tasks independently, deciding upon when support might be needed.

## MARKING POLICY

The Director of Studies has responsibility for the marking policy, which is administered and monitored within each department by the Head of Department.

There is no expectation that every piece of work completed by a pupil should be annotated but rather a requirement that assessment is substantive and formative when it is administered. To enable this, teachers should provide challenging success criteria which is then used as a benchmark against which to provide feedback for further development. When work has been returned, there should be either dedicated time given in class for the pupil to respond to the feedback given or re-crafting set as part of a homework task. This re-crafting should be completed in a different colour ink to illustrate the developments being made.

All departments are responsible for ensuring that pupils communicate in a way that is appropriate and should seek to identify errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Teachers are reminded to use their discretion in highlighting such errors, particularly with pupils who have a dyslexic profile. However, mistakes involving key terms should always be highlighted. Where errors are identified, the onus is on the pupil to correct their work.

At GCSE and A Level, work will be assessed on the relevant examination scale, with an expectation that pupils should know the level at which they are currently working and know how to improve. In the Lower School, a selection of work should generally be assessed on a bi-weekly basis (depending upon the number of lessons taught in this period).

At GCSE and A Level there are seven summative assessment points across the two-year programme at which data will be collected. Two of these assessment points will be internal examinations.

In the Lower School, departments are expected to develop assessments in line with the school grading system four times a year. Assessments should be used to inform grades that are awarded in academic reports.

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

At Cokethorpe, our policy is to assess our pupils regularly, consistently, objectively and in a manner that is best suited to assist their development as pupils and individuals. The specific mechanisms employed may change depending on circumstances but the intent – to help our pupils make full use of their potential – remains consistent.

Assessment is part of the fabric of the School, occurring in the course of lessons and in marking, which remains the most regular, consistent and constructive dialogue with pupils and pupils. The aim is a system in which:

- Every pupil knows how they are doing, understands what they need to do to make progress and how to use the support which is available
- Every teacher is equipped to make well-founded judgements about pupils' attainment, understands the concepts and principles of progression and knows how to use their assessment judgements to plan for the future
- The School has in place structured systems for making regular, useful, manageable and accurate assessments of pupils and for tracking their progress
- Every parent knows how their child is doing, what they need to do to improve and how they can support the child and teachers

- Benchmarks
  - Prep School
    - In house benchmarks established by the Head of Prep School
  - Lower School
    - The benchmarks for assessment established by Department Heads and approved by the Director of Studies
  - Fourth and Fifth Form
    - The benchmarks for assessment are nationally recognised GCSE (or equivalent) standards
  - Sixth Form
    - The benchmarks for assessment are nationally recognised GCE (or equivalent) standards

One important facet of assessment is the setting of targets to help pupils and students improve their Attitude to Learning. These are discussed and reviewed at Progress Review Evenings (PREs), which form the cornerstone of dialogue between school and home.

## REPORTING POLICY

### Teacher Reporting

Attitude to Learning is the essential component in ensuring that young people go on to become independent, curious and lifelong learners, so it is at the heart of Cokethorpe's reporting system from First Form to Upper Sixth.

### First, Second and Third Form

Parents receive two full written reports and one grade card over the course of each academic year. These reports focus on pupils' attitude to learning alongside a judgement regarding their attainment. In line with the School's emphasis on developing leadership characteristics, teachers report on a pupil's Ambition for Learning and their Responsibility for Learning. These aspects of learning are measured in each subject on a four point scale – Exceptional engagement, Positive engagement, Limited engagement or Poor engagement. In addition, Attainment Descriptors are supplied in each subject to reflect departmental assessment results. In addition to written reports, at least one Progress Review Evening is scheduled for each year group as an opportunity for parents and pupils to meet with the teacher to identify targets for future development.

### GCSE & Sixth Form

At GCSE and Sixth Form level, attainment is measured in the form of a 'Currently Working At' grade, based on recent assessment of knowledge and understanding of the skills and content covered.

### Tutor Reporting

Tutor reports accompany teacher reports, as the tutor's role is to spot patterns and make connections between various subjects and previous reporting periods. Tutors report on a pupil's personal development, commenting on engagement with School life.

## SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD POLICY

The aim of the Scholarship and Award Programme is to recognise excellence in the fields of Academics (recognised with Academic Scholarship) and Art, Design Technology, Drama, Music and Sport (recognised through respective Awards). Such recognition carries privileges and responsibilities, enjoying considerable prestige within the school.

### Scholars

The Heads of Scholars are directly responsible for overseeing the assessment process and programme for Academic Scholars. As the programme aims to recognise for top ability in each respective area, it is policy that Academic Scholarships are to number no more than five in any given year group, until the introduction of the Philosophical Investigations programme in the Fourth Form.



Form assessment for Scholarships happen at four entry points: First Form, Third Form (for external candidates), Fourth Form and the Sixth Form.

- First Form Scholarship Assessment: Candidates for First Form Scholarships are nominated by their teachers during the Michaelmas Term and are subsequently invited to an interview with the Heads of Scholars. Scholarships are awarded at Christmas.
- External candidates for an Academic Scholarship are nominated by their Prep School and are subsequently invited to sit three subject papers of one hour each. Candidates are required to sit papers in English, Mathematics, and Science, and will sit the Headmaster's paper. We also assess learning attitudes in order to determine which candidates would be the best role models for promoting academic endeavour. All candidates are interviewed by the Heads of Scholars and the Headmaster.
- At the end of Third Form, pupils are invited to apply for places on the Scholarship programme. Applicants will be required to sit the Headmaster's paper and be interviewed by the Heads of Scholars. Their performance in end of year examinations will also be taken into account, as will the feedback provided by subject teachers in their reports.

Academic Scholars receive a traditional gold and blue tie.

## Awards

The Director of Co-Curricular is responsible for coordinating school-wide assessment and communicating policy with the Heads of Art, Design and Technology, Drama, Music and Sport (Award Managers). To as large an extent as possible, Award Managers are autonomous in selecting the criteria needed for respective Awards and those candidates judged to be deserving of Awards.

At the discretion of the Headmaster, certain financial incentives can be put in place with specific relation to the Award in question (eg reduced fees in music lessons).

Formal assessment for Awards happens at three entry points: First Form, Third Form, and Lower Sixth Form. Details as follows:

- First Form Award Assessment: Occurs in the third half term of the First Form (i.e. January) Candidates are nominated by respective Heads of Department and participate in assessments administered by each HoD.
- Third Form Award Assessment: Occurs in March of the Second Form for external candidates. Award candidates are nominated by respective HoDs who conduct assessments administered by the HoD. External candidates are nominated by their current school.
- Sixth Form Awards: Awards (Art, Design and Technology, Drama, Music and Sport) are offered to prospective Sixth Form candidates as part of the 16+ Scholarships and Awards Assessment week in the Michaelmas Term of Fifth Form.
- Sixth Form Leadership Grants: In the Lent Term of Lower Sixth students may apply for a Sixth Form Leadership Grant. Successful applicants retain the title of Leadership Grant Holder until they leave School.

It is possible for a pupil or student who has not been previously awarded during these formal assessment periods to gain a Scholarship or Award in other years besides First Form, Third Form, and Lower Sixth. Details for Scholarship review are as follows:

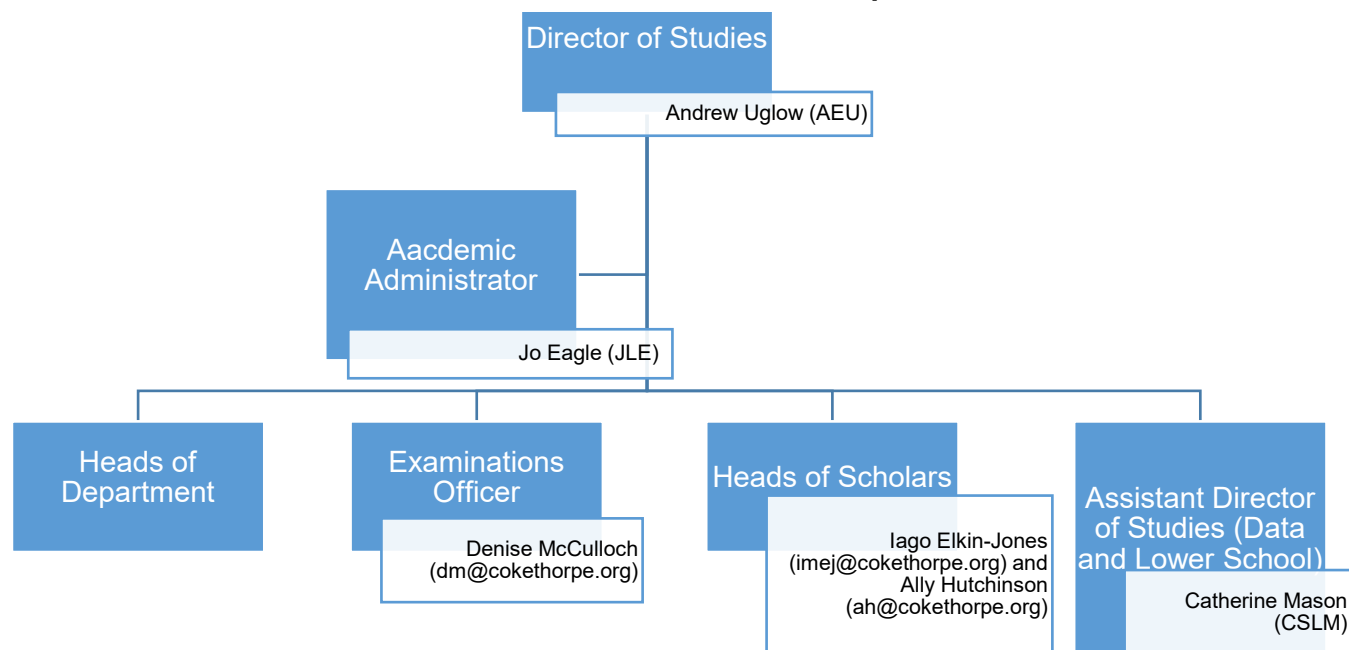
All Awards are reviewed annually with the Director of Co-Curricular and Award Managers in June. Award Managers are to produce evidence as to why a particular or potential Award Holder is to gain or lose an award. These recommendations are made to the Headmaster. Any change in Award Status for a particular student is to be communicated before the end of the year through a letter home. New Award Holders are recognised in Headmaster's Assembly the following September.

Award Holders in Art, Drama, Music and Sport receive a brass ocellus badge which is to be worn on their blazers.

All-Round Scholarships are not explicitly recognised, but it is possible for a pupil or student to have a Scholarship and Award, or multiple Awards, simultaneously.

Scholars and Award Holders are aware at the time of receiving the Scholarship or Award that keeping them is conditional on good performance. However, taking a Scholarship or Award from a pupil or student should be viewed as a measure of last resort.

# Academic Structure and Responsibilities



Role	Responsibilities (indicative, not exhaustive)
Director of Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall running of the Academic Programme at Cokethorpe School</li> <li>Liaison with Housemasters and Tutors re. issues relating to academic progress</li> <li>Overview of preparation for GCSE and A Level examinations</li> <li>Development of assessment processes across the school</li> <li>Coordination of responses to parental queries and concerns re. academic matters</li> </ul>
Academic Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timetabling (inc. supervision of options processes)</li> <li>Reporting</li> <li>Management and organisation of the PRE process</li> <li>Management of the cover system</li> </ul>
Assistant Director of Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective management and communication of data collected through iSAMS at assessment points</li> <li>Maintaining overview of progress made by pupils across subjects in line with data projections</li> <li>Supporting Departments in establishing data management processes</li> <li>Oversight of the Lower School Curriculum</li> <li>Reviewing progress of pupils in First and Second Form</li> <li>Managing the Cokethorpe Diploma process</li> </ul>
Head of Learning Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration and organisation of issues relating to Specific Learning needs</li> <li>Liaison with teaching staff to ensure that teaching techniques respond to the needs of pupils</li> </ul>
Examinations Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration and organisation of External Examinations</li> <li>Administration and organisation of Internal Examinations</li> </ul>
Heads of Scholars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration of the Scholars application process, including marketing to feeder schools</li> <li>Oversight of events designed to promote the value and importance of scholarship</li> </ul>
Heads of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership and management of teaching and learning within their department (see job description)</li> </ul>