



SANDWELL ACADEMY



Key Stage 4 Curriculum 2022 -2025

Information for Parents and Students

January 2022

Overview of Key Stage 4

Key Stage 4 often starts in Year 10, but at Sandwell Academy students start in Year 9 because we are able to achieve the National Average progress in Key Stage 3 in 2 years. Key Stage 4 covers the 13-16 age range and is a very important phase of education.

Students start earlier so that they can choose some of the subjects they enjoy most, which will increase interest and help them to achieve success. Subject teachers then have the opportunity to start examination courses earlier, which gives students more time to prepare for examinations enabling us to maximise success.

The qualifications students achieve during this time will influence strongly their course opportunities and career prospects in the 16–18 phase. The policy of the Academy is to 'provide courses that will give students the best opportunities to succeed.'

All students will receive a balanced educational provision with the opportunity to achieve a range of GCSEs and vocational qualifications. This includes a rota of option subjects in Year 9 that allows the Students to continue to experience other subjects, even though they have not chosen to study them through to Year 11 as one of their main options.

With the support of parents, we can expect a great deal from each individual student. Outcomes will vary, but you can be sure that teachers will be supporting students to achieve the best that they can.

The Senior Leadership Team will keep the predicted grades for students under regular review and work with parents if there is any risk of students under-achieving.

During Key Stage 4 more homework can be expected. Students are advised to plan their time carefully so that they can continue to take full advantage of extracurricular activities provided during Session 3.

The Session 3 programme helps students achieve through targeted revision and study support. All students will be expected to attend at least one Session 3 per week. Students will be informed on a regular basis which Session 3 they should attend.

Qualifications that are available

The Academy has worked hard to provide a range of qualifications to suit all needs. This includes both vocational qualifications and the traditional GCSE courses. These are all level 2 courses.

English Baccalaureate

In 2010 the Government introduced an English Baccalaureate which students are strongly encouraged to follow. It involves studying five GCSE subject areas: English, Mathematics, Science, a Modern Foreign Language and either Geography or History. It is likely that successful attainment of these subjects at grades 9 - 5 will enhance a student's application to university and it will be recognised by employers. The Academy therefore encourages students, where appropriate, to achieve this qualification via the curriculum that is offered.

BTEC – This is a national vocational qualification.

This qualification recognises student competence in a work related area. Assessment is largely through internally assessed units, which are externally moderated, together with an externally assessed exam. These courses are more practical and students achieve an Award equivalent to 1 GCSE.

GCSE - These are the traditional examinations known as the General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Assessment in all GCSE qualifications is now **Linear**. This means that all examinations and submission of marks happen at the end of the course. Some parts of course are examined as **Controlled Assessments**. This means that students prepare and research over a period of time, before completing an extended task under formal examination conditions.

Students who achieve high GCSE or BTEC grades can progress to AGCE (Advanced General Certificate of Education) or BTEC National qualifications after age 16. These are all level 3 courses.

Students must realise that most jobs, places in training or further education require students to achieve at least five GCSEs at grade 9 - 5 or the vocational equivalent.

Compulsory subjects

Students will be taught in groups that will reflect their work to date and how well they have performed in the end of Key Stage 3 SATs in Year 8.

GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature

As part of a combined course, students will study both English Language and English Literature following the Pearson Edexcel syllabus. Throughout the course, students will study a range of literary and non-fiction texts, as well as analyse features of language and writing styles. Each route is assessed by external examination at the end of the course.

Students are encouraged to read widely, both literature and non-literary texts (newspaper and information texts). Students are also encouraged to buy their own copies of set texts and plays so that they can re-read and revise them in preparation for the examinations.

GCSE Mathematics

All students will follow the OCR Linear GCSE Mathematics at either Higher or Foundation level, as is applicable to individual students' ability. Some students will study Mathematics at entry level if appropriate. All students are encouraged and expected to exhibit problem solving skills and strategies.

Assessment involves three external exams, two calculator papers and a non-calculator paper. Higher tier will be graded from 9 to 3. Foundation tier will be graded from 5 to 1. All papers are equally weighted and can contain any of the topics from the Mathematics curriculum. Students will take the three papers only once (at the end of Year 11).

GCSE Science

Most students will study GCSE Combined Science Trilogy, which is equivalent of two GCSE qualifications. This includes elements of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and practical skills. Examples of topics studied include rates of reactions and bonding in Chemistry, the heart, lungs and cell structure in Biology, and forces, energy and electricity in Physics.

Those students who have demonstrated a talent for Science will have the opportunity to study Physics, Chemistry and Biology in greater depth, resulting in the award of three GCSE Science qualifications. Students who would like to be considered for this option need to choose Triple Science in the option block.

Alphabetical list of subjects available

GCSE Art

Course breakdown: Unit 1 60% coursework. Unit 2 40% practical examination.

This is a broad art and design course, where students will explore all forms of art: drawing, printmaking, photography, digital image and manipulation to name a few. This course is ideal for those students who have natural flair and passion for Art and allows them to develop their creativity.

Year 9: Across two projects, Natural Forms and Portraiture and a series of workshops, students will be introduced to a variety of experiences exploring two dimensional media techniques and processes including both traditional and new technologies. Students will also take part in an educational visit to support their coursework.

Year 10: Students will continue with their portfolio and complete a further project to develop their skills in drawing, painting, photography and mixed media. They will explore the work of contemporary artists to inform and inspire their own work. Students who are ahead of schedule and who are working to their target grades will be challenged further by being given additional tasks or starting an additional project which they will complete in Year 11. This has enabled past students to gain further marks and experience.

Year 11 students follow a directed path in the first term and have the opportunity to improve upon previous coursework or complete work. In January, students will begin Unit 2, the externally set task (set by the exam board). After a period of preparatory work, usually 12 weeks, students will create their final piece under exam conditions, 10 hours split over two days.

BTEC Tech Award in Enterprise (Level 2) (Business)

Business Studies is a useful, practical and fascinating subject that students enjoy and benefit from. BTEC Business Studies is a worthwhile qualification for a variety of careers and it is a combination of business theory and practical application. It is a very useful course if students wish to enter the world of business or eventually run their own business.

Students will complete three mandatory units.

One of the units (component 3), is assessed by an exam and marked by Pearson, students may resist this, if required before they complete the qualification. Students must pass this unit, to pass the course. The other two units (Component 1 and Component 2), are coursework based and marked by the class teacher before being moderated by Pearson.

Assessment:

BTEC Tech Awards are awarded at seven grades from Level 1 Pass to Level 2 Distinction*

GCSE Business

The GCSE Business aims to enable students to know and understand business concepts, business terminology, business objectives, the integrated nature of business activity and the impact of business on individuals and wider society.

The course covers topics such as; enterprise and entrepreneurship, spotting a business opportunity, putting a business idea into practice, making the business effective, understanding external influences on business, growing the business, making marketing decisions, making operational decisions, making financial decisions and making human resource decisions.

Assessment is two written examinations:

- **Paper 1:** Investigating small business (1 hour and 30 minutes, 50% of the qualification)
- **Paper 2:** Building a business (1 hour and 30 minutes, 50% of the qualification)

Whilst studying the course the students will have the opportunity to go on **educational visits** such as Cadbury World and Jaguar Land Rover as well as have talks/workshops from entrepreneurs that come into the Academy.

Upon completion of either of the two Business Courses offered by the Academy, students can continue to study further qualifications within the Business field. Often students will embark on careers within Marketing, Finance, Accounting, Advertising, Economics and Law.

GCSE Design Technology

This course builds on the skills already covered in Key Stage 3 Technology. Students will develop high quality design and communication skills as well as gaining an in depth knowledge of materials and manufacture processes. They will develop this knowledge through the design, prototyping and evaluation of products.

Skills will be developed through focused research and analysis, developing design proposals through sketching, drawing, CAD work and modelling. Practical sessions will involve manufacture in timber, plastic and metal using hand tools and Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM).

Drawing tasks will focus on creativity and the development of ideas. There will be an emphasis on designing for clients, testing and evaluation. Briefs will be set by external clients and guest designers where possible.

It is intended that this course will prepare students for a career in design such as product design, interior design, industrial design, transport design and manufacture. This course is suited to students with analytical and artistic skills.

The assessment of this course will be through:

- A NEA task that is set by the examination board and is then internally assessed and externally modified (50%)
- A written examination set by the examination board which is externally assessed (50%)

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Within the Food preparation and Nutrition course students will prepare, cook and present a wide variety of dishes and menus to support the understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials.

Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the chemical processes as well as sensory qualities and safety considerations when preparing, processing, storing, cooking and serving food.

Food preparation skills are integrated into five core topics:

- Food, nutrition and health
- Food science
- Food safety
- Food choice
- Food provenance

Research tasks will explore a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions as well as analysis of the economic, environmental, ethical, and socio-cultural influences on food availability and production processes, including the physiological and psychological effects of poor diet and health.

Course breakdown is as follows:

Non examination assessments:

Task 1: Food investigation (15%) Students' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients.

Task 2: Food preparation assessment (35%) Students will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within a single period of no more than 3 hours.

Examination: (50%) Theoretical knowledge of food preparation and nutrition.

Upon completion of this course, students will be qualified to go on to further study, embark on an apprenticeship or will be prepared to progress into a full time career in the catering/food industries.

GCSE Geography

Geography is the study of Earth's landscapes, peoples, places and environments. It is, quite simply, about the world in which we live. Geography is unique in bridging the social sciences (Human Geography) with the natural sciences (Physical Geography). This exciting and relevant course studies Geography in a balanced framework of physical and human themes and investigates the link between them.

Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the United Kingdom (UK), Higher Income Countries (HICs), Newly Emerging Economies (NEEs) and

Lower Income Countries (LICs). Students will then apply their knowledge through fieldwork in at least two locations. Topics of study include hazards, climate change, weather, landscapes, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use. Students are also encouraged to understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes.

Whilst studying the course the students will have the opportunity to develop communication skills, graphical and cartographical skills, technological skills, including ICT and GIS, interpersonal skills through debate and discussion, and problem solving skills. The course is assessed through three written papers.

BTEC Health and Social care

At KS4, the course involves the study of the care needs of a range of individuals, from young babies to the elderly. During the course, students have the opportunity to also learn about health and wellbeing and discover a range of career options.

Students learn the importance of regulations in nursery and care home settings and the skills that care workers need to develop. Students gain an appreciation about human learning and development through important life stages, as well as the psychological and the biological aspects of care. The course will develop their key communication and presentation skills.

Assessment:

25% external written exam and 75% portfolio work.

GCSE History

GCSE History will help students understand how the world we live in was shaped, and make them consider today's society in a different way. As Winston Churchill said 'Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it'. Employers and universities regard History qualifications very highly.

In History, students will find out about the past and gain an understanding of why events in history have taken place. Students will develop an ability to ask relevant questions and assess the accuracy of different sources of information.

The course will be assessed by examination only and the topics covered are:

	% of GCSE	Exam length	Content
Paper 1	30%	1 hr 15 mins	Medicine in Britain, c1250 – present with a thematic study on the British sector of the Western Front, 1914 – 18: injuries, treatment and the trenches
Paper 2	40%	1 hr 45 mins	Period study on the American West British depth study on Early Elizabethan England, 1558 – 88
Paper 3	30%	1 hr 20 mins	Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918 – 39

ICT – Digital Information Technology (BTEC Tech Award)

This qualification is for students who may want to start a career in Digital Technology. It is an ideal qualification for those intending to progress directly to employment in Digital Technology, IT or to an IT apprenticeship. This vocational qualification will provide students with the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for a career in this sector.

All Students will study three mandatory units as followed:

Component 1:

Exploring User Interface Design Principles and Project Planning Techniques (coursework moderated by Pearson)

By completing this unit, students will develop their understanding of what makes an effective user interface and how to effectively manage a project. They will use this understanding to plan, design and create a user interface.

Component 2:

Collecting, Presenting and Interpreting Data (coursework moderated by Pearson)

By completing this unit, students will understand the characteristics of data and information and how they help organisations in decision making. They will use data manipulation methods to create a dashboard to present and draw conclusions from information.

Component 3:

Effective Digital Working Practices (exam externally assessed)

By completing this unit, students will explore how organisations use digital systems and the wider implications associated with their use. This exam can be resat once.

Assessment:

BTEC Tech Awards are awarded at seven grades from Level 1 Pass to Level 2 Distinction*

BTEC Media

This course combines the study of media theories with the practical production of a range of media texts and products. The course is designed to explore the four key concepts: Media Language, Audience, Representation and Institutions. Assessment combines examination and coursework units.

During the course, students will study how the media works and what its function is in today's society. They will develop the ability to evaluate and analyse media texts, including magazines, newspapers, films and a variety of Television and Film genres. Linked to this, students will plan and create some real media products.

Media Studies is the course for students who enjoy analysing products. To be successful in Media they have to be dedicated to completing work in their own time as well as in class.

There are plenty of opportunities to create their own products as well as the deep analysis tasks.

BTEC Tech Award in Music

This course is designed for students who enjoy performing, composing and listening to a wide variety of music and builds on the skills covered in Key Stage 3 Music lessons.

Component 1: Exploring the music industry (30%)

Students will explore musical styles and techniques, and gain an understanding of roles in the industry. This unit is assessed internally through assignments.

During these assignments students will:

Explore different styles and genres of music

Take part in practical workshops to understand the music creation process

Learn about the different roles within the music industry

Investigate relationships between different areas of the music industry

Component 2: Developing music skills (30%)

Students will develop musical knowledge, skills, and techniques and apply them to a music product. This unit is assessed internally through assignments.

During these assignments students will:

Reflect on their progress, and on areas for improvement

Choose a job role and explore the skills needed to fulfil it

Develop a range of skills

Apply skills and techniques in a music performance, creation or production

Component 3: Responding to a music brief (40%)

Students will put skills into practice by responding to a brief as a composer, performer or producer.

This is an externally set task. In this task students will need to:

Choose an area of the industry that excites them (composer, performer, or producer)

Explore the brief and come up with possible responses and ideas

Use relevant resources, skills and techniques to develop and refine musical material

Present their final response (solo or in a group)

Review and reflect your approach to the brief and their final outcome.

BTEC Performing Arts

This qualification is for students who enjoy all aspects of Performing Arts and are willing to have a go at everything.

Component 1: Exploring the Performing Arts (30%)

Aim: get a taste of what it's like to be a professional actor, dancer or musical theatre performer.

Assessment: internally assessed assignments

Students will:

Explore performance styles, creative intentions and purpose

Investigate how practitioners create and influence what's performed

Discover performance roles, skills, techniques and processes

Component 2: Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts (30%)

Aim: Develop skills and techniques in the chosen discipline(s) of acting, dance and musical theatre.

Assessment: internally assessed assignments. Students :

Take part in workshops, classes and rehearsals

Gain physical, interpretative, vocal and rehearsal skills

Apply these skills in performance

Reflect on progress, performance and how to improve

Component 3: Performing to a brief (40%)

Students will consider how practitioners adapt their skills for different contexts, and put this into practice in a performance.

Assessment: externally assessed task, where students work in groups of between three and seven members to create a performance based on a set brief.

Students will:

Use the brief and previous learnings to come up with ideas

Build on skills in classes, workshops and rehearsals

Review the process using an ideas and skills log

Perform a piece to a chosen audience

Reflect on the performance in an evaluation report

GCSE Religious Studies

During the GCSE Religious Studies course, students will be studying the beliefs, teachings and practices of two of the major world religions; in addition to focusing on one of these major world religions to reflect on the religion's perspective on philosophy and ethics in the modern world.

Students will have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the outside world through exploration of the impact of beliefs, teachings, ways of life and expressing meaning and opinion.

Students will be encouraged to express their own informed views on fundamental questions about identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, value and commitments.

Students will also complete thematic studies which includes Relationships and Families, Crime and Punishment and Peace and Conflict.

The written and communications skills acquired during this course are highly sort after by all professions.

Topics covered are:

- Christianity: Religious Beliefs and Teachings & Practices
- Judaism: Religious Beliefs and Teachings & Practices
- Thematic studies (Relationships and Families, Religion and Life, The existence of God and revelation, Religion Peace and Conflict, Crime and Punishment)

Assessment:

is through written examination in Year 11.

The work studied as part of this course will be different to that done by all students as part of their core RE entitlement.

GCSE Separate Science

Students that have a high level of ability in Science (on course to achieve level 4.4 by the end of Year 8) and who enjoy Science can opt to study Separate Sciences. Students will achieve separate GCSE qualifications in Biology, Chemistry and Physics and will study each of these subjects in more depth than if they were completing Combined Science.

Additional topics include looking at the periodic table and bond energies in Chemistry, studying the kidney in Biology and studying medical concepts and magnetic forces in Physics. The extra content in the Separate Science courses gives students an advantage if they decide to study any of the Sciences at A-level, however this is not a requirement.

The analytical and written skills acquired during this course are thought highly of by employers.

GCSE Spanish

Languages are important, both in our everyday lives and in the world of work and leisure. All students who study GCSE Spanish will be following the Pearson specification. Students are assessed in listening, reading, writing, speaking and translation skills. The course is broken down into five themes and twelve sub-topics. There are also opportunities to explore Spanish literature, cinema and art.

By the end of the course, students will be able to express their thoughts and opinions in Spanish in a spontaneous manner in both spoken and written format.

Theme 1: Identity and culture

Who am I? relationships; when I was younger; what my friends and family are like; what makes a good friend; interests; socialising with friends and family; role models

Daily life: customs and everyday life; food and drink; shopping; social media and technology (use of it, advantages and disadvantages)

Cultural life: celebrations and festivals; reading; music; sport; film and television

Theme 2: Local area, holiday and travel

Holidays: preferences; experiences and destinations, travel and tourist transactions: travel and accommodation; asking for help and dealing with problems; directions; eating out; shopping

Town, region and country: weather; places to see; things to do

Theme 3: School

What school is like: school types; school day; subjects; rules and pressures; celebrating success

School activities: school trips; events; exchanges

Theme 4: Future aspirations, study and work

Using languages beyond the classroom: forming relationships; travel; employment

Ambitions: further study; volunteering; training

Work: jobs; careers; professions

Theme 5: International and global dimension

Bringing the world together: sports events; music events; campaigns and good causes

Environmental issues: being 'green'; access to natural resources

Sport (GCSE PE or BTEC Tech Award in Sport)

All students will continue to develop their sporting abilities and fitness levels throughout KS4 at Sandwell Academy in a compulsory practical session each week. Students will participate in activities that will engage them in physical activity and help to encourage and promote the benefits of life long activity.

Students can also opt to take a Sport course, in which case they will be placed on either the BTEC Tech Award in Sport or the GCSE PE programme. The course assigned to the students will be the most appropriate for them based on their practical ability and literacy skills.

BTEC Tech Award in Sport (Level 2)

Students will learn about fitness components, different training methods and plan a fitness-based training programme. Students will also develop practical sports performance by improving their technique across a variety of sports, and develop leadership roles within the group when leading warm-ups and small skill based coaching sessions.

All learners will study three mandatory units as followed:

Component 1: Preparing Participants to Take Part in Sport and Physical Activity

(Internal Assessment 30%)

Component 2: Taking Part and Improving Other Participants Sporting Performance

(Internal Assessment 30%)

Component 3: Developing Fitness to Improve Other Participants Performance in Physical Activity (External Assessment / Exam 40%)

Assessment:

BTEC Tech Awards are awarded at seven grades from Level 1 Pass to Level 2 Distinction*

GCSE PE

This course enables students to combine theory and practical application. The AQA examination specification enables students to take part in a variety of sports as a performer.

Assessment is through two written examinations and practical assessments. Students have to be very competent in three sports (a combination of two team and one individual sport or two individual and one team sport). Students should be playing at school level on a regular basis to be viewed as competent.

The theory aspect of the course is 60%, broken down into two 30% examination papers. 10% of the course is based on coursework where students evaluate their performance in one of their three selected practical sports.

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport (30% of GCSE)

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of data

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport (30% of GCSE)

- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and well-being
- Use of data

Non examination: Practical assessments and coursework (40% of GCSE)

- Students are assessed in 3 sports that are prescribed by the AQA exam board.
- Students cannot be assessed in alternative sports to ones that are set e.g. kickboxing, rounder's and any fitness based activity
- Each practical sport is worth 10% as is the coursework
- Students must be competent in team sports and individual sports



The Students' Entitlement

All students will study the compulsory subjects of English and Mathematics, Science, Geography or History and Core RE. The Academy then provides a range of subjects from which students can select to enhance their curriculum experience.

Every effort will be made to provide the subjects chosen but it must be appreciated that this is not always possible. When this occurs, alternatives will be discussed.



Our Guarantee

The Academy guarantees to honour its commitment to provide the National Curriculum with an emphasis on Physical Education and opportunities to explore the world of Business.



Partnership

The students' needs are the main focal point in our partnership with parents and carers. It is the Academy's responsibility to ensure that parents, carers and students are properly advised before decisions are reached. In return the Academy expects the support of parents and carers in achieving the best for their children.

The Academy's guarantee and students' entitlements are non-negotiable. They are there to protect the interests of the students. Without deviating from this and in the interest of deploying effectively the Academy's resources, the Academy reserves the right to implement amendments to the subjects' students might study.