

Overview

Rochester Independent College primarily offers A Level, GCSE and iGCSE examinations although students are also prepared for STEP papers and, for students from overseas, the IELTS examinations. The choice of syllabus is left to the professional judgement of individual teachers.

Our curriculum offers flexibility of course length, few restrictions on subject choices in later years and students are constantly supported to follow a personalised programme where they take exams as and when they are ready, rather than being held back by school year groups.

The College's key objective is to imaginatively tailor an education around the students who come here and we are able to deal with both the most academically able and those who **may** need extra support. The focus is on identifying individual strengths, weaknesses and interests and developing a programme of study that allows students to move at a pace appropriate to them.

The College has a statutory responsibility to actively promote what the DfE has defined as British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance). The new regulations also require independent schools to prevent the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject and to ensure that where political views are presented to students, either in curricular or extra-curricular activities, there is a balanced presentation of opposing views. The College has an international staff as well as student body and this contributes towards an environment where respect and inclusion are qualities taught to all of our students both in and out of the classroom with equal opportunities and respect fostered for all regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability or any other protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The College

- provides students with a broad general knowledge of and promotes respect for public institutions and services through lessons in subjects such as PSHEE, History, English Literature and Geography
- uses student councils throughout the College to help show students how they can influence decision making through participating in democracy
- encourages students in Form/Personal Tutor meetings and PHSEE lessons to be aware of injustice and how this can be challenged
- ensures College rules are fair, transparent and used consistently
- helps students distinguish between right and wrong through PHSEE lessons and Form/Personal Tutor meetings and through the fair and transparent use of our disciplinary and anti-bullying procedures
- employs Police visits to build links and help students understand their place in the community
- uses opportunities in English, History and PHSEE lessons to explore the differences between civil, criminal and religious law
- through implementation of our Safeguarding and Anti Bullying procedures creates an environment where student individuality is celebrated and all feel safe
 - delivers a visiting speaker programme that exposes students to a wide range of views and belief systems, that has in the past included talks from international members of the College

staff and older international students speaking to our younger students (online opportunities to deliver this are currently being sought due to Covid 19)

- in PHSEE and English lessons in particular but across the curriculum and through the choice of extra-curricular trips and visits, exposes students to British institutions and other cultures, encouraging respect and tolerance for all. For example:
 - literature studied in English stimulates reflection upon philosophical and cultural issues such as tolerance, diversity, respect and spirituality
 - environmental focus of many of our Lower School schemes of work means that the students are exposed to local, national and international institutions and charities involved in sustainable development as well as local democracy
 - Geography allows students to explore different countries and compare their political, cultural and religious practices to those in Britain
 - the study of British and international events in History, demonstrating the basis on which British institutions were founded

Years 7 – 11

For students of statutory school age, our curriculum is designed to offer a broad and balanced education, including access to linguistic, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas.

The curriculum offers opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through many areas:

- PHSEE lessons – including aspects of citizenship and education with regard to the world of work
- the overall College ethos
- our extensive programme of trips and visits (currently on hold due to Covid 19)

As appropriate for an international community, our curriculum is non-denominational.

We want our students to develop an interest in a subject for its own sake, not just to learn which boxes to tick in an exam and there is the opportunity to try out a range of subjects, sometimes just for enjoyment. We don't just look at the national frameworks for Years 7-9, GCSE and A Level specifications and decide that is all our students need to know. Teachers encourage students to aim above purely prescriptive GCSEs to A Levels and beyond, to work and university.

All teachers deliver subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of students, including students with SEND, so that all students benefit from an education which fulfils requirements and have an opportunity to learn and make progress. Guidance to teachers on such strategies is issued by the SENCO.

Although we are not a specialist school, we have a great deal of success meeting the needs of SEND due to our very small classes and lots of individual tuition. All Year 7 students follow the Lexia literacy programme. Our EAL students benefit from a great deal of 1-1 tuition and small group sessions.

In Years 7-9, a broad curriculum is taught with all students studying English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, French and/or Spanish, Electronics, ICT, Music, Drama, Sport, PHSE, Film &

Media and Art & Design. The Years 7-9 timetable is a flexible one and we can tailor it to the interests of particular year groups. Co-curricular programmes are designed to give students experience of subjects not normally taught at key Stage 3. In Year 7, students study Graphics and follow the Lexia literacy programme; in Year 8 students study Politics; in Year 9 students are given the opportunity to experience Art, Digital Media and Drama (in the form of studying for a LAMDA qualification).

Year 7-9 Curriculum Review, 2020-2023

The Year 7-9 Curriculum is currently undergoing an exciting three year review process with the aims of:

- increasing the level of challenge (a target outlined in the last ISI inspection)
- planning for student progression within subjects so that students are prepared well for the rigours GCSE and A level study
- increasing the diversity of the texts and influential people studied to include more role models with protected characteristics

Heads of Department and Subject Leads are reviewing schemes of work and assessed tasks to ensure that subject specific higher order thinking and communication skills are taught, assessed and developed. The College is developing a common core set of organisational skills and character traits that we value and would like to develop within all subjects. The Year 7 curriculum review will be complete for September 2021, Year 8, September 2022 and Year 9 September 2023.

ICT

All students in Years 7-9 study ICT with the option to continue on the GCSE programme in Year 10 or as a one year course in Year 11. Lessons cover a broad range of topics including web coding, animation, video editing, games and app design. All students receive induction into the use of Google Drive and its Apps as this is the platform that we use for remote and blended learning. All students in the Lower School complete initial modules in Staying Safe Online which cover student online safety across multiple platforms in the modern digital age.

Technological education is also covered by the use of information technology in preparing Science projects, the use of compositional software in Music Technology lessons, the use of design and publishing software and digital film making in Art and Design, Film and Media Studies lessons.

Sport - Options have been limited by Covid 19 and alternatives are being sought.

In weekly sessions students are surveyed for their ideas and opinions so we can arrange activities that they will enjoy and are interested in. This has included external provision such as skiing, trampolining, 10 pin bowling, ice skating, archery, football, volleyball, squash, badminton, climbing, athletics, tag rugby, kickboxing, rounders, sailing, canoeing and quad biking.

Years 10 + 11 Curriculum

Discussions are held with students in Years 9 and 10 to help them choose their GCSE options with a view to their future career path and further study aspirations. The option blocks are tailored each year to the interests of the year group to satisfy as many students as possible. Students can review their option choices at the end of Year 10 as we are able to offer GCSE courses over one and two years. Only English, Maths and Science are compulsory although everyone is encouraged to take at

least one MFL and one Arts subject. Students take between 7 and 11 GCSEs depending on ability and the circumstances in which they join us. All students in Year 11 take both English and English Literature at IGCSE and follow pathways appropriate to their ability and aspirations.

Theme weeks

At various points in the academic year, students in Years 7-10 work on cross-curricular activities and projects on a collapsed timetable. Themes are centred around national campaigns and events such as Diversity Awareness Weeks, Anti-Bullying, Mental Health and Wellbeing, British Science Week and Art & Design and students work together across all year groups taking part in a variety of talks, trips, presentations and assignments. The scope for these has been somewhat limited with the current Covid situation as students may only interact with other students in their bubble.

Work experience - on hold due to Covid restrictions

In normal years, placements are organised for all Year 10 students to build on careers education and to prepare them for Post-16 choices in Year 11. The College uses good practice guidance from Medway Education Business Partnership and involves input from students, Form Tutors, administration staff and parents/guardians. PSHEE lessons and visits from MEBP and potential employers are used to prepare students for their placements and to ensure effective debriefing and self-evaluation. The programme is designed to raise aspirations, prepare students for adult life, promote economic wellbeing and improve employability. Careers guidance is also provided by Form Tutors, Head of Year and the Principal, both in class and individually.

Sixth Form

RIC aims to offer students a free choice in A level subject combinations. We help students create as broad a package of A level subjects as possible, particularly in the Lower Sixth. For example, Science and Mathematics students often take Sociology to foster essay writing and communication skills.

The College's Personal Tutor system is designed to give Year 12 and 13 students individualised advice, particularly for careers and university entrance, once options are chosen.

In the two-year A level programme, students are not expected to sit AS exams, although in certain cases exceptions may be made where it is in the student's best interests. Students usually choose four subjects in Year 12 and drop one in Year 13, with the exception of students with EAL, who start Year 12 on 3 subjects to enable them appropriate time to study for the IELTS exam and attend English for Academic Purposes lessons. If students are retaking GCSEs they may take two or three subjects in Year 12. The flexibility of our timetable means that students can, where appropriate, drop a subject in favour of another with the agreement of parents/guardians and their Personal Tutors, based on their interests, aptitudes and future aims. The flexibility of the Sixth Form curriculum means that the timetable is very fluid and can be revised at various points in the academic year.

Many students join RIC just for Year 13 or to retake their A levels. Their curriculum is an individually tailored one that often includes a mixture of retake courses and intensive one year A levels.

Students wishing to specialize in the Creative or Performing Arts at A Level are usually encouraged to take at least one more traditionally academic subject alongside. Subject combinations with too much

overlap, e.g. Media Studies and Film Studies or Business Studies and Economics, are discouraged unless to the clear benefit of the student's future aims.

RIC arranges mock university and, where appropriate, career interviews for Sixth Formers. Careers and UCAS advice is given by the Personal Tutors on an individual basis. Year 12 students follow a broad UCAS programme including guest speakers and advice on university, apprenticeship and career routes alongside UCAS fairs and a trip to the University of Kent. Disruption to this schedule due to Covid has resulted in online alternatives being sought.

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