

Curriculum Policy

Carrickfergus Academy



Version	Date	Revision Author	Summary of Changes
1	September 19	CPN	
2	November 20	CPN	Updated day and class structure
3	October 21	CPN	Updated 6 th Form admissions criteria
4	September 22	CPN	Pathways/Stanines/Day structure/CLC
5	January 23	CPN	Approved by BOG 26.1.23
6	September 24	CPN	Class structure/Subjects/PPS/CLC
7	December 25	CPN	Subjects/6 th Form admissions/CLC offer/Pathways
	January 2026		Ratified by BOG

Rationale

Carrickfergus Academy is committed to providing all young people in its community with the very best educational experience through a broad, balanced, modern curriculum with high quality learning and teaching at its core. High quality relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils, are a strong feature of life at our school and allow the Academy to be a school where learning, opportunity and enjoyment for pupils, alongside high achievement, is the norm.

Purposes

The aim of the Carrickfergus Academy curriculum is to develop the whole learner by:

- Providing a relevant, modern curriculum and learning strategies which maintain interest and enjoyment and promote self-esteem
- Encouraging pupils to achieve their full potential by effort, skill and courage
- Fostering a learning environment in which all pupils are stimulated and encouraged to have high expectations of themselves and for their future
- Developing the ability of pupils to reflect on all of their learning and behaviour and make positive decisions that will impact on future learning
- Offering a broad and balanced entitlement to all pupils
- Encouraging independence, self-discipline, responsibility, and respect for others
- Developing critical thinking and lifelong learning
- Ensuring continuity and progression from Year 8 to leaving school, by building on individual strengths, interests and experiences
- Affording pupils opportunities to develop and apply their ICT, Literacy and Numeracy capabilities across the curriculum
- Preparing pupils for further study, the world of work and to contribute to society and the economy
- Embedding skills development through practical, theoretical and creative learning opportunities
- Providing opportunities for cross-curricular and collaborative learning
- Offering a wide range of enriching co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

Procedures

Day Structure

Reg	9.05 - 9.20	
P1	9.20 - 9.50	
P2	9.50 - 10.20	
P3	10.20 – 10.40	Break Yr8
P4	10.40 – 11.00	Break Yr9
P5	11.00 – 11.20	Break Yr10 & Senior Site
P6	11.20 – 11.40	
P7	11.40 – 12.10	
P8	12.10 – 12.45	Lunch Year 8 (Everyday)
P9	12.45 – 13.20	Lunch Year 9, 11 & 13 Year 10 on Thursdays only (Due to Games)
P10	13.20 – 13.55	Lunch Year 10, 12 & 14 Year 9 on Thursdays only (Due to Games)
P11	13.55 - 14.25	
P12	14.25 - 14.55	
P13	14.55 - 15.25	

Monday	9.05 – 3.25
Tuesday	9.05 – 3.25
Wednesday	9.05 – 2.25
Thursday	9.05 – 3.25
Friday	9.05 – 3.25

KS3 Curriculum 2025

Pupils are placed in classes with other young people of similar ability. This creates potential for pupils to progress at the right pace, with maximum opportunity for success.

Periods per subject

Year 8

Subject	Per
Art	3
Business	1
Citizen	1
Drama	1
Emo Health	1
Employ	1
English	7
Games	2
Geography	2
History	3
Home Ec.	2
I.T.	2
Literacy	1
Maths	6
Music	2
Numeracy	1
P.D.	2
P.E.	3
R.E.	2
Science	5
Spanish	3
Tech.	2
	53

Year 9

Subject	Per
Art	2
Business	1
Citizen	2
Employ	1
English	7
Games	2
Geography	4
History	4
Home Ec.	2
I.T.	2
Literacy	2
Maths	6
Music	2
Numeracy	1
P.D.	1
P.E.	2
R.E.	3
Science	4
Spanish	3
Tech.	2
	53

Year 10

Subject	Per
Art	2
Business	1
Citizen	1
Employ	1
English	6
Games	2
Geography	5
History	3
Home Ec.	2
I.T.	2
Literacy	1
Maths	8
Music	2
Numeracy	1
P.D.	1
P.E.	2
R.E.	3
Science	4
Spanish	4
Tech.	2
	53

KS3 Class structure

Class Names		Class Names		Class Names	
Yr8	Prac	Yr9	Prac	Yr10	Prac
C	C1	C	C1	C	C1
A	C2	A	C2	A	C2
	C3		C3		C3
R	R1	R	R1	R	R1
I	R2	I	R2	I	R2
	R3		R3	K	R3
					R4
K	K1	K	K1	F	F1
F	K2	F	K2	E	F2
				G	F3
E	E1	E	E1		
				U	U1

Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools

CARE Classes

Year 8 – 8E

Year 9 – 9E

Year 10 – 10U

In September 2025, we opened our third *Care Class*, providing specialist provision within the mainstream school for young people with specific ASD needs, creating a combination of tailor-made timetables, bespoke learning materials and opportunities for empowerment and building resilience, all delivered by a team of experienced and dedicated staff.

The classroom itself is designed to have a nurturing effect with carefully designed furniture and equipment to meet pupil's learning and social development. We are dedicated to providing a caring and welcoming environment, that moulds confident and enthusiastic young people.

KS4 Curriculum 2025

All pupils follow courses leading to GCSE qualifications or the equivalent. In some subjects, pupils can follow alternative courses more suitable for their academic ability.

All pupils study a combination of the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Careers, LLW/King's Trust & Employability Skills, Religious Education, Games and additional subjects from the Options choices.

Over recent years we have introduced a number of subjects, Vocational, BTEC, OCN, and Occupational Studies, which have allowed our pupils a wide range of choices. Pupils follow a Pathway system where they are guided into subjects suited to their ability based on their stanines.

Pathways for success

Option choices

Pupils will be placed on an Options Pathway which suits their ability level based upon the stanine scores achieved in their KS3 assessments and examinations. We seek to ensure that every pupil is on a Pathway which provides a challenge, as well as a realistic successful outcome at Key Stage 4.

The pathways are:

Pathway 1 – For pupils with average stanines of 9,8,7 – pupils have a **choice of 4** of the more Academic subjects.

Pathway 2 – For pupils with average stanines of 6,5,4 – pupils have a **choice of 4** Academic and Vocational subjects. For subjects with two Pathways, Subject Leaders will allocate students into the most suitable choice.

Pathway 3 – For pupils with average stanines of 3,2,1 - pupils have a **choice of 3** subjects.

At least 2 of the subjects must be Vocational which are marked with a V.

Pathway 1 Stanines 9,8,7	Pathway 2 Stanines 6,5,4	Pathway 3 Stanines 3,2,1
Core subjects 1. English Language (GCSE) 2. Mathematics (GCSE) 3. Science (GCSE) 4. LLW (GCSE)	Core subjects 1. English Language (GCSE) 2. Mathematics (GCSE) 3. Science (GCSE) or* Science (OCN) V 4. LLW (GCSE) or* King's Trust V and Employability Skills V	Core subjects 1. English Language (GCSE) 2. Mathematics (GCSE) 3. Science (OCN) V 4. King's Trust V 5. Employability Skills V
Non-examined Core Subjects Careers Games Religious Studies	Non-examined Core Subjects Careers Games Religious Studies	Non-examined Core Subjects Careers Games Religious Studies

Pathway 1 - Optional Subjects Pupils choose 4 subjects	Pathway 2 - Optional Subjects Pupils choose 4 subjects	Pathway 3 - Optional Subjects Pupils choose 3 subjects
Art & Design (GCSE)	Art & Design (GCSE) or*	Creative Arts & Digital Technologies (OCN) V
Business & Communication Systems (GCSE) V	Creative Arts & Digital Technologies (OCN) V	Business & Communication Systems (GCSE) V
Skills for Business (OCN) V	Business & Communication Systems (GCSE) V	Skills for Business (OCN) V
Child Development (GCSE)	Skills for Business (OCN) V	Child Development (GCSE)
English Literature (GCSE)	Child Development (GCSE)	Government & Politics (GCSE)
Further Mathematics (GCSE)	English Literature (GCSE) (9 - 5 in English required)	Hair & Business (Occ St) V
Geography (GCSE) or*	Further Mathematics (GCSE) (9 - 5 in Maths required)	Health & Social Care (GCSE)
Travel & Tourism (BTEC) V	Geography (GCSE) or*	History (GCSE)
Government & Politics (GCSE)	Travel & Tourism (BTEC) V	Food & Hospitality* (OCN) V
Health & Social Care (GCSE)	Government & Politics (GCSE)	Horticulture* (OCN) V
History (GCSE)	Hair & Business (Occ St) V	ICT (BTEC) V
Hospitality (GCSE)	Health & Social Care (GCSE)	Music (GCSE)
ICT (BTEC) V	History (GCSE)	PE & Sport (BTEC) V
Media Studies (GCSE)	Hospitality (GCSE) or* Food & Hospitality* (OCN) V	Religious Studies (GCSE)
Music (GCSE)	Horticulture* (OCN) V	Spanish (GCSE) (9-5 in Spanish required)
PE & Sport (BTEC) V	ICT (BTEC) V	Technology (Occ St) V
Religious Studies (GCSE)	Media Studies (GCSE) (9 - 5 in English required)	Travel & Tourism (BTEC) V
Science: Double Award (GCSE)	Music (GCSE)	
Spanish (GCSE)	PE & Sport (BTEC)	
Technology & Design (GCSE)	Religious Studies (GCSE)	
	Science: Double Award (GCSE) (9,8,7 in Science required)	
	Spanish (GCSE) (9-5 in Spanish required)	
	Technology & Design (GCSE) or* Technology (Occ St) V	

Pathways for Success additional information

Subjects will not run if there are insufficient pupil numbers. Pupils should also consider picking back-up subjects.

Subject areas marked **or*** - Subject Leaders will guide pupils into the most suitable subject depending upon ability levels.

Pupils on Pathway 1 and Pathway 2 may progress to study A Levels at Carrickfergus Academy, dependant on their academic progress at KS4.

Pupils on Pathway 3 are expected to follow their chosen area of study at a Further Education College.

*Pupils cannot choose 1. Diet, Food & Hospitality and 2. Horticulture as they lead to the same Vocational Skills Qualification.

V = Vocational subject.

(Occ St) = CCEA Occupational Studies.

KS3 exam stanine score calculated using results achieved in English, Maths, Science, History and Geography.

Periods per subject

Year 11

Subject	Per
Art	6
BCS	5
Careers	1
Child Dev	7
Employability Skill	3
English	6
English Lit	6
Further Maths	6
Games	2
Geography	6
Gov + Politics	7
Hair & Business	7
Health & Social	6
H.E. DF&N	7
History	6
Horticulture	7
Hospitality	6
Kings Trust	3
I.C.T. BTEC	7
LLW	7
Maths	7
Media Studies	6
R.E.	1
R.E. GCSE	6
DA Science	6
Science	5
Sport Studies	6
Technology	6
Technology Occ	6
Travel	6
	166

Year 12

Subject	Per
Art	5
BCS	6
Careers	1
Child Dev	5
English	7
English Lit	6
Games	2
Geography	6
Gov + Politics	6
Hair & Business	5
Health & Social	6
H.E. DF&N	6
History	6
Horticulture	6
Hospitality	6
Kings Trust	5
ICT BTEC	6
LLW	7
Maths	7
Media Studies	5
R.E.	1
R.E. GCSE	5
DA Science	5
Science	7
Sport Studies	6
Technology	5
Technology Occ	5
Travel	5
	148

Post 16 Curriculum 2025

Pupils meeting the 6th Form admission criteria have the opportunity to undertake Advanced Level study. The range of courses is reviewed annually in an attempt to accommodate those students who wish to return to school in Year 13. In exceptional circumstances, and based on teacher recommendations, pupils may be admitted to 6th form study with less than the required number of points.

Periods per subject

Year 13

Subject	Per
Art	10
Business	10
Careers	1
English Lit	10
Geography	10
Gov + Pol	10
H&S Care	10
DA H&SC	10
History	10
ICT	10
Media St	11
R.E.	10
Sport St	11
DA Sport	
Science	10
DA Science	
Technology	11
Tourism	11
	155

Year 14

Subject	Per
Art	10
Business	10
Careers	1
English Lit	
Geography	10
Gov + Pol	10
H&S Care	10
DA H&SC	11
History	10
ICT	11
Media St	11
R.E.	10
Sport St	11
DA Sport	
Science	10
DA Science	
Technology	11
Tourism	11
	147

Sixth Form Admission Criteria

In order to be considered for a place in Year 13 a student must:

- have achieved a minimum of 6 GCSE** points to include a minimum of 3 at A* - C grades (or equivalent) at GCSE. Any student who has not attained a GCSE grade of A*-C in English and/or Mathematics will be required to re-sit these subjects in Year 13 if admitted into the Sixth Form. Such students must agree to attend GCSE English and/or Mathematics lessons as directed by the school
- The GCSE points score will be determined as per the Sixth Form Admissions Policy
- Study a minimum of 2 out of a total of their 3 subjects in Carrickfergus Academy
- Have satisfied any subject specific criteria in each subject which they wish to take to AS and/or A2. Please note, our partner schools in the Carrickfergus Learning Community set their own subject entry requirements. Students must ensure they meet the entry requirements set, this information is found in the Carrickfergus Learning Community Subject Choices Booklet
- Satisfy the Principal on past school record and achievement including attendance, behaviour, commitment to study and punctuality at KS4; A satisfactory attendance rate would be higher than the school average for the previous year
- Where required, attend an interview with a member of Carrickfergus Academy Senior Leadership Team, or Sixth Form Team, to choose an appropriate course of study including suitable subject choices
- Provide evidence of equivalent non-UK qualifications

**In the case of students whose performance in GCSE examinations may have been detrimentally affected by medical or other problems, the Principal may, in exceptional circumstances, waive any of the admissions requirements. Appropriate documentary evidence, medical, or otherwise will be taken into account. In such a case, the decision of the Principal will be final.

The offer of a place to any student at Sixth Form is at the discretion of Carrickfergus Academy.

It should be noted that occasionally a Sixth Form subject is oversubscribed, in which case, students will be allocated to a course based on overall academic performance as highlighted in the subject specific criteria in the Sixth form Admissions Policy. Conversely, where a course is not viable, the school reserves the right not to run that particular course.

Entitlement Framework

Carrickfergus Academy is committed to meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework. The Entitlement Framework ensures that schools provide pupils with access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It provides pupils with access to a range of courses which are linked to relevant learning and career pathways.

Carrickfergus Academy, in collaboration with the other schools in the Carrickfergus Learning Community, is proactive in the pursuit of shared education at Advanced Level for the benefit of all pupils.

Carrickfergus Academy Sixth Form pupils can access certain courses by attending Carrickfergus Grammar School or Ulidia Integrated College for part of the school day, and pupils from these schools attend Carrickfergus Academy for agreed courses.

To meet the requirements of the Entitlement Framework, schools must enable their pupils to access 21 courses at Key Stage 4 and at Advanced Level.

One third of the offered courses, in both Key Stages, must be designated as General and one third Applied.

A General qualification is one where knowledge, understanding and skills are developed within a subject context. Assessment will mainly be through written tasks.

An Applied qualification is one where knowledge, understanding and skills can be developed through practical demonstration and/or within a context related to employability.

Each school year, the Vice Principal Curriculum completes an Entitlement Framework audit of curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 demonstrating that the school fulfils the Entitlement Framework requirements.

Carrickfergus Academy and CLC Sixth Form offer 2025 - 2026

V	W	X	Y
Art & Design	Government & Politics	ICT	English Literature
Business Studies	Health & Social Care (Single award)	Sports Studies	Geography
Health & Social Care (Single award)	ICT	Technology & Design	Health & Social Care (Double award)
History	Science – Life & Health	Travel & Tourism	Media Studies
			Religious Studies
		CLC	CLC
		Accounting	Government & Politics
		Business CTEC	History
		Performing Arts	Nutrition & Food Science
		Physical Education	Photography
			Physics

Provision

The curriculum addresses the statutory requirements of the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007 and the Northern Ireland Revised Curriculum (2007).

Programmes of Study

Programmes of Study and related Schemes of Work are the responsibility of the Subject Leaders who ensure that the statutory requirements are met in their planning. Copies of Schemes of Work and Programmes of Study are kept online in the Private folder for monitoring purposes.

Assessment & Reporting

The procedures of the school are explained in the Assessment and Reporting Policy. The policy outlines the purpose, principles and methods of assessment as well as recording progress and achievement.

Special Educational Needs

All pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs will be given access to the full statutory curriculum and to the full range of extra-curricular activities. The need for reasonable adjustments will be assessed and implemented in accordance with SENDO legislation. Full details are available in the Special Educational Needs Policy.

Homework

Homework is an important part of school life, much valued by parents. Homework helps to develop independent learning, self-discipline and good organisational skills. The purpose of homework is to extend learning beyond the classroom and to develop pupils as independent learners. Full details are available in the Homework Policy.

Class Placement

All pupils are tested upon entering Carrickfergus Academy. At Key Stage 3 the results are used to allocate pupils to the appropriate band. The band will be distributed into a number of classes for general subjects, these classes are then distributed into smaller practical groups. The classes allow pupils to move within their bands for social reasons. Pupils can also move across bands depending on academic achievement throughout the year. At Key Stage 4, where possible, pupils are banded in English, Maths and Science depending on their end of Year 10 assessment and teacher recommendation. Some streaming may be possible within GCSE subjects if Option Blocks contain more than one Pathways class.

Class Sizes

The size of classes in Carrickfergus Academy will be determined by budgetary considerations and DENI recommendations in DE Circular 2016/11, which state that:

- The maximum size for a general class is 35 students
- The maximum size for a practical class is normally 20 students, though there are exceptions for Science, Art & Design, Technology & Design, Music, Physical Education and Home Economics.

Subject	Total number of students	Year groups
Science	26	Years 8–10
	24	Years 11–12
	20	Years 13–14
Art & Design	26	Years 8–10
	20	Years 11–14
	30 (Sports Hall/Pitch)	Years 8–14
Physical Education	25 (Gym/Assembly Hall)	Years 8–10
	20 (Gym/Assembly Hall)	Years 11–14
	30 (Sports Hall/Pitch)	Years 8–14
Home Economics	26	Years 8–10
	24	Years 11 - 12
	20	Years 13–14
Technology & Design, Engineering & Music	26	Years 8–10
	24	Years 11 - 12
	20	Years 13–14

The health and safety of our pupils is a priority and therefore all subjects or courses that might be considered as 'practical', or which may include a practical element, have a set class limit of 20 pupils at KS3 and KS4.

Leadership, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Curriculum

Overall responsibility for the curriculum rests with the Board of Governors in consultation with the Principal and Vice Principals. The curriculum will be evaluated in its provision to:

- Adhere to the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum
- Meet the requirements of the Entitlement Framework
- Meet the needs of all learners
- Maximise pupil achievement