



MERCHANT TAYLORS'  
School

# The Fourth Form Curriculum

Guidance and Course Details

2021 / 2022

## **We are a community forged from innovation, bravery, confidence, inspiration and joy**

We inspire a life-long love of learning and provide academic excellence for pupils, staff and support staff. We have a culture of collaboration, coaching and challenge. We are brave in our pursuit of excellence: progress is driven by innovation and reflection.

The co-curriculum supports and enriches the academic curriculum through clubs, societies, trips and publications. We celebrate and explore the relationship between academic excellence and co-curricular participation: at different points in a school career, the focus upon each element will vary. Similarly, we maintain the balance between our focus upon promoting excellence and wide participation. We provide co-curricular opportunities to develop the character of everyone in the school - pupils, staff and support staff. All aspire to become more well-rounded, charming, confident, enthusiastic and independent. We work as a team, creating lasting bonds within our community.

We care for each other in a civilised, collaborative and respectful manner. That spirit creates a safe, inspiring and inclusive environment that promotes self-esteem. Our focus is upon the individual and the community: knowing and caring for everyone in the school, whether pupil, staff or support staff, creates a place in which people feel they belong, have shared purpose and have a role to play. We use our strength to serve the wider community beyond the school.

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## Introduction to the Fourth Form

I would like to warmly greet you all and look forward optimistically to September, and the start of the Fourth Form at Merchant Taylors'. For the school, it is a time of energy and rejuvenation, and I expect the new arrival of so many talented boys will drive the year group to greater heights. Whilst events necessitate a restructuring of our Introduction to the Fourth Form, especially for those joining us in September, we will continue to be in regular contact during the summer term, and will provide more personal opportunities to meet - even if it is virtually - as soon as we can.

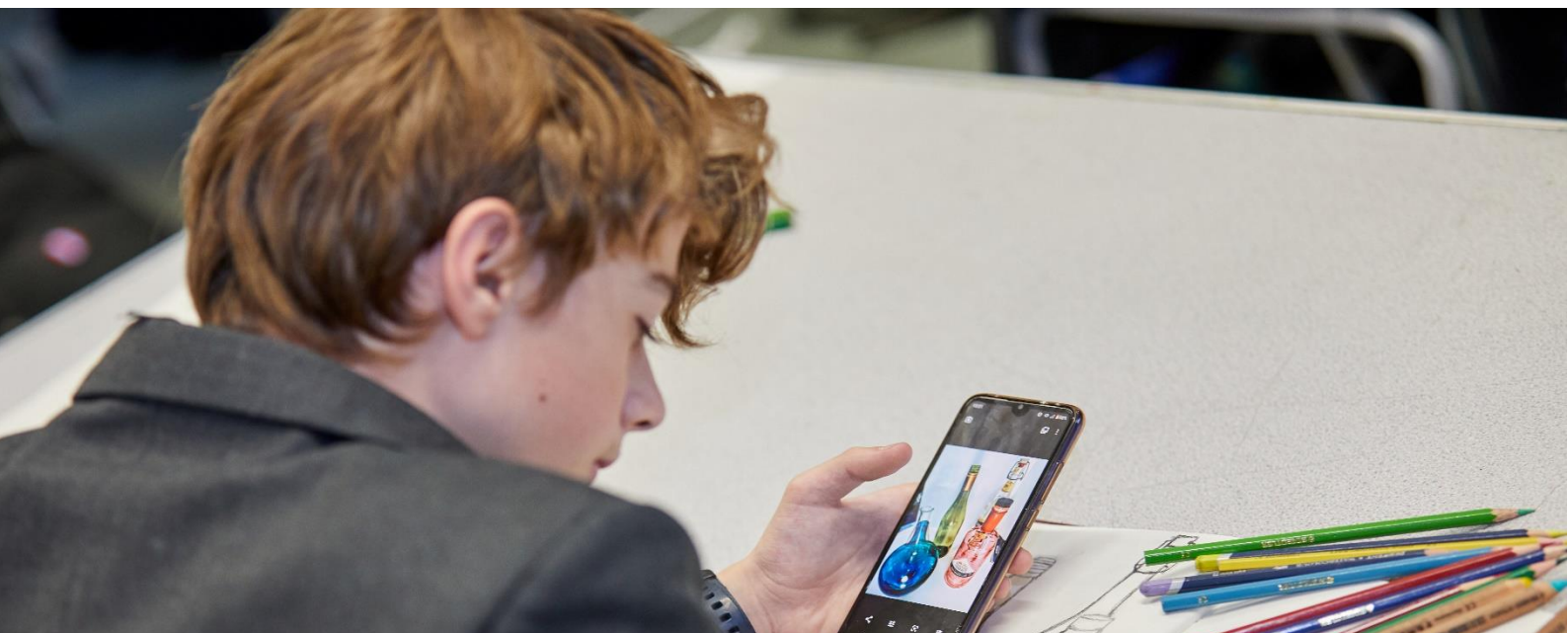
The school has magnificent grounds, world-class facilities and more than 450 years of history. Boys' Tutors and Heads of House are compassionate, stabilising guides, and the learning environment is shaped by motivated, skilful teachers. The school has engaged and ambitious Governors, and a Headmaster with a strong vision for academic excellence and holistic wellbeing. And yet, what makes Merchant Taylors' the vibrant community it is are the boys, whose aspirations, emerging characters and interests will determine the future. I am excited by the potential, and look forward to extending a warm welcome, particularly to new boys and parents, following national guidance.

We hope that the welcome from Mr Garvey, and this choices booklet with information from Heads of Department is clear. I encourage the boys in particular to discuss optional subject choices with their current teachers, and consider where their academic talents and interests lie. It is important to understand, too, that many opportunities exist beyond the curriculum taught in lessons. Many boys enjoy spending time doing music, games, Design and Technology or Art projects as part of their Co-Curricular interests, even if they choose other options.

Although the last year has been disruptive, we hope that all boys and parents alike have embraced some of the opportunities of working differently. Continuing to be creative and engaged in imaginative challenges, to think independently about ideas and projects, and to read and collaborate in different ways with peers can be a great opportunity.

Whilst we are not able - yet - to welcome you all personally into the Merchant Taylors' community we will once the situation allows.

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## Introduction to the Curriculum

Welcome to you all, both those of you joining us for the first time and those of you who have been part of the community at Taylors' for the last two years. One thing is sure, no matter how long you have been here, you will all be part of the same Fourth Form and will move through the School as a collective and united year group. We wish you every success.

The first step on your academic journey into the Fourth Form at Taylors' starts here. The Fourth Form Curriculum is an interesting one. You are taught a number of subjects as part of your studies. Alongside those subjects which are compulsory, we have a number of subjects which are optional for you to choose between. The following table illustrates the makeup of the Fourth Form Curriculum:

<b>Compulsory Subjects</b>	<b>Optional Subjects</b>
English	French
Maths	German
Biology	Spanish
Chemistry	Latin & Greek
Physics	Latin
Computer Science	Music
Geography	Drama
History	Sports Science
Religious Studies	
Art & Design	
Design & Technology	

Each boy must select three subjects from the Optional column which he would prefer to study, including one of French, Spanish and German. The rationale behind our thinning out the curriculum a little is that boys in the Fourth Form do an awful lot. This is a preliminary step towards their choosing their GCSE options in March of the Fourth Form. We have run this programme for a good number of years and have found that the balance has led to the boys in the Fourth Form having a manageable breadth in their timetable and enjoying the subjects they study.

We do our very best to accommodate subject preferences, but timetabling constraints do mean that not everyone can always have exactly their top three choices; for this reason we ask for a back-up choice too.

This booklet outlines the content and structure of those Optional Subjects. Each Head of Department writes about their subject. Their email addresses are in the handbook at the end of their outlines. Do please contact them if you have any subject specific questions. At the end of the booklet, you will find some frequently asked questions and the answers to them. I hope they are of some use.

**Robert Garvey**  
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## Modern Foreign Languages

### French, German and Spanish

Modern Languages are core subjects for GCSE in all leading Independent Schools in the UK. At Merchant Taylors' we lay considerable importance on the necessity to reach at least a competent level **in a minimum of one foreign language**. We would encourage strong linguists to study two or even three modern languages in the Fourth Form as you will benefit from the many links and similarities between European languages and at the same time gain a different cultural perspective in each. We aim to achieve a positive language-learning experience that will enthuse you to continue your study of languages in to the Sixth Form, university and to become lifelong language learners. You will acquire knowledge of contemporary and historical issues gleaned through the study of film, multimedia resources and short literary extracts and you will gain a study skillset that is different to all other subjects taught in the school. Furthermore, many Russell Group universities either require or recommend a minimum of one GCSE/IGCSE language qualification as an entrance requirement for their courses. Recent Government initiatives have also sought to counteract the desperate shortage of linguists in the UK and, needless to say, your university and career prospects are considerably enhanced with a language qualification.

Why do we teach French, German and Spanish? Because they are relatively easy to learn and this ensures quick progress and a level of mastery that could not be achieved in the same time in a character-based or tonal language. The CBI conducts a Business survey every year which, among other things, highlights the most useful languages for British businesses. Every year for the last five French, German and Spanish have come out on top with remarkably little change in percentages. In the Divisions and the Fifth Form, you will be able to study two modern languages and many of our best candidates choose to do so.

For German and Spanish we offer *ab initio* courses that assume no prior knowledge so they are not suitable for those of you with extensive prior knowledge, at least at this point in your MTS career. As with French, the courses are delivered over two hours per week of tuition. We cover the basic topics and vocabulary and grammar that one would expect to cover in a new language and that lead on to the study of the language for IGCSE. We focus on all four skill areas: reading, writing, listening and speaking and we teach grammar explicitly to ensure a firm grounding.

For French we assume prior knowledge (2 years+ of study) and build on the Common Entrance & 13+ syllabus, progressing rapidly to IGCSE-style tasks. In the Fourth Form we study a film in each language about an important historical event to engender an awareness of the history and traditions of the country. We also make use of online resources in our two language labs to reinforce learning of vocabulary and grammar through video clips and online games and resources. Merchant Taylors' has featured in an episode of Easy German, which is available to watch on YouTube. We also encourage pupils to get involved in wider reading through our use of graded target language magazines and a poetry competition in the Spring Term where every pupil learns and recites a short poem. We offer plenty of language trips in the Middle School – two French trips, a German exchange and a Spanish exchange. Essentially we place a lot of emphasis on communication and cultural awareness as these are the key skills to take away for use in later life.

There is no modern language that is better or easier than the other – it's more important to choose with the heart and where your interests lie. Spanish has many similarities to French in terms of grammar and vocabulary. German has many similarities to English and borrows some grammar from Latin. For native speakers or semi-native speakers, we would ask you to avoid picking a language in



which you are almost fluent and focus on a new language in the Fourth Form. You will have the opportunity to pick up your background language in the Divisions or even sit the IGCSE qualification outside the timetable if you are extremely proficient. It should be borne in mind that if you do not pick French, German or Spanish in the Fourth Form, you will not currently be able to pick these languages up in Year 10 unless you are a native/semi-native speaker. By the end of the Fourth Form, you should be in a position to decide whether you are suited to studying two modern languages and many of our pupils decide to do so to IGCSE and beyond.

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## **Classical Languages Greek and Latin (joint course)**

The study of Classical Greek presents unique and exciting challenges for pupils who are fascinated by the workings of language, and who are interested in the ancient world. Like Latin, it is a language that is governed by changes to the endings of words, but possesses more irregularities and complexities – a quality that provides charm and no little bewilderment to its students. We feel that our most able Latinists benefit from the study of Greek, and each year around 25 pupils (two classes) choose to study the demanding and rewarding joint Greek and Latin course.

Typically, pupils will spend one and a half hours a week studying Greek, and half an hour studying Latin. We assume that all pupils are beginners in Greek, though knowledge of the alphabet before starting in September will be helpful. If your son has studied Greek already, we shall provide additional materials, to ensure that he is being stretched. In addition to the essentials of the language, for which we follow Greek to GCSE, the pupils will study an extract of Homer's *Odyssey* in the original Greek.

In their study of Latin, the pupils will cover the same material as those studying Latin only, albeit in an accelerated manner, and without the study of Roman literature. This means that by the end of Year 9, those studying just Latin and those studying Greek and Latin will be up to the same point in the Latin to GCSE course book.

In Year 10, Greek and Latin are taught as *separate* GCSE courses, and for this the pupils study both Language and Literature – in Greek, this would usually be the study of a Greek tragedy by Euripides. The fact that the languages are taught separately at GCSE means that at the end of Year 9, pupils can choose to continue with both languages, one language, or neither into Year 10. In this way, if a pupil chooses to study Greek and Latin in Year 9, he is not committing to the study of these beyond that year, so we encourage our best Latinists to try their hands at the Greek and Latin course. By the end of Year 9, around a dozen pupils tend to have seen the light at the mouth of Plato's cave, and choose to continue their study of Greek.

If you have any questions at all about the study of Greek and Latin, and whether it is suitable for your son, please do not hesitate to contact me

**Philip Harrison**  
**Head of Classics**  
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## Latin (without Greek)

All pupils at MTS have studied Latin in Years 7 and 8, and most of those who join at 13+ have studied it for several years already. It is therefore unsurprising that many boys – around sixty each year (excluding those studying the joint Latin and Greek course) – choose to continue their study of Latin.

We split the course into Latin Language and Roman literature and history, with typically one lesson each week on each. This reflects the way in which the GCSE has these two components.

In the Language lessons, we start from the beginning of John Taylor's *Latin to GCSE Part 2*, which picks up on the language where our Year 8s have finished, and where most of our 13+ entrants have reached by following the Common Entrance syllabus. In the course of the year, pupils will cover a large part of the language that is required for the GCSE, and in addition will read accounts of early Rome, based on Livy.

In the other half of the course, all pupils studying Latin will study extracts of Latin literature in the original and in translation. There will be extracts from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as well as from Roman comedy and satire. This provides an experience of what is required at GCSE and A level, and allows pupils not only to demonstrate their sensitivity towards literature, but also to develop an appreciation of what makes truly great literature, which has survived the judgment of 2000 years.

If you have any questions at all about the study of Latin, and whether it is suitable for your son, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you son has not studied Latin before but would like to start it here, please contact me to discuss further.

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## **Music**

The aims of the Fourth Form Music curriculum are as follows: to provide an holistic musical education to instrumentalists, singers, and non-instrumentalists, while also laying the foundation for boys who wish to continue to study academic Music at GCSE. Such an education needs both academic and practical study – as such, opting for Music is highly recommended for all boys who sing or play an instrument. Nonetheless, Music is a subject open to ALL boys in the Fourth Form.

From the Fourth Form onwards pupils are given an advanced and rigorous musical education in all areas, as we aim to develop the skills needed to study Music for public examinations to levels beyond the requirements of the exam specifications.

Many of the boys who opt for Music in the Fourth Form are instrumentalists and singers who already perform to the level required by exam boards to access the top mark bands in Performing at GCSE. However, differentiated tasks and resources are embedded in the curriculum to allow all pupils to access the same learning through performing activities. By the end of the Fourth Form, we aim to enable pupils who do not take instrumental lessons to learn to sing and play simple melodies both from staff notation and by ear.

In the Fourth Form, scores and sequences of pupils' compositions are created using Sibelius, Logic, and Garageband in the Music Technology suites. Pupils are able to listen to extended works, identifying basic structures, compositional devices and instrumental and vocal timbres, and comment upon the historical, social, geographical and stylistic background to pieces of music that they have heard. These skills have value and meaning in their own right, but also lay the foundation for academic study at GCSE, A Level, and beyond.

Pupils develop their ability to distinguish between good and less good performances of a piece, and suggest ways in which it might be improved, through the regular and focussed use of self- and peer-assessment, as well as through more in-depth reflections of recorded performances. These appraisal skills are also developed when considering compositions, and pupils also learn to comment meaningfully upon the quality and effectiveness of a piece of music within its stated aims through carefully designed questions posed in listening activities (written and/or aural).

Pupils will explore a range of styles and genres, including popular music, world music traditions, and classical music. As mentioned earlier, this will include using state-of-the-art technology to compose music. The curriculum will give those boys who choose Music in the Fourth Form, but opt not to study Music at GCSE, the opportunity to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the historical, cultural, social, and musical contexts of music and musicians that will enhance their studies as instrumentalists and singers, while also developing those skills cited above.

All performers who opt for Music in the Fourth Form will enhance their understanding of the music they play, and all musicians who are inclined to opt for Music at GCSE will benefit from the Fourth Form Music course as it is designed to lay the groundwork for further study.

### **Music beyond the Academic Curriculum**

All boys who learn an instrument or sing will continue to have a comprehensive range of opportunities to perform as a soloist or as part of an ensemble in bands, orchestras, and choirs, regardless of whether they have opted for Music in the Fourth Form or not.

There is a very wide range of musical activities offered to all boys at Merchant Taylors' - currently nearly 300 instrumental and singing lessons are delivered each week in school by a team of 24 visiting music teachers, and 22 ensembles ranging from full-size orchestras and choirs to jazz bands and chamber music rehearse every week to perform in concerts throughout the year

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## Drama

Drama in the Fourth Form offers pupils the opportunity to explore a range of creative and critical thinking skills. They are encouraged to become imaginative and confident performers. They develop the key skills needed to begin GCSE Drama, skills which are also relevant to a variety of careers. Pupils learn to present themselves in public with confidence. They are required to collaborate, communicate and negotiate with others, to think analytically and evaluate effectively.

Pupils study and perform a range of plays, exploring the journey from page to stage. Highlights currently include *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Simon Stephens, *Lord of the Flies* by Nigel Williams and *Blood Brothers* by Willy Russell. They are introduced to key practitioners as a way of approaching character and text.

Pupils are introduced to technical theatre and design: lighting, sound, set design and costume. A number of pupils choose to learn how to operate the specialist equipment in the Studio Theatre and work as technicians for the performances.

Alongside the practical elements of the course, pupils are introduced to drama theory as preparation for the GCSE course. This involves the analysis of text and performance in written format.

Fourth Form Drama requires pupils to work as motivated and committed team players. Group work is a key component of the course.

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## **Sports Science**

Sport is one of the most popular Co-Curricular options at the school and Sports Science is an ever popular subject at GCSE and A Level. The aim of the Fourth Form Sports Science course is to inspire a passion and interest in the world of Sports Science. It would prepare students for GCSE Physical Education, giving them an engaging introduction about how to improve their sport, health and well-being.

The course will look at many different elements of a traditional Sports Science curriculum without directly duplicating any GCSE content. There will be a strong practical emphasis with an assignment at the conclusion of each half-term. Units of work will include:

### **Term 1 - Training programmes and physical health**

Each pupil will learn the steps in planning, delivering, monitoring and evaluating their own self-designed training programmes. This will help them to understand: why they might undertake different types of training; how to measure certain aspects of fitness; and how to ensure a training programme is appropriate, safe, effective and achievable. The majority of this will be practical based with an evaluative assignment at the end of the term. This will give boys a sound understanding of how to utilise these skills in making sure they look after themselves physically throughout their life.

### **Term 2- Practical sports psychology and diet and nutrition**

Each pupil will learn some of the theory behind sports psychology and performance. This is helpful in providing pupils with a good understanding of practical ways to approach the mental side of sports and exercise. Practical workshops and experiments will allow the pupils to experience the impact of psychology first hand.

Pupils will also look at their approach to diet and nutrition with a focus on its importance for health and well-being and sports performance. Pupils will discover what constitutes a balanced diet and some simple tools to begin to practically apply this knowledge. The pupils will engage in a hands-on exploratory approach and challenge their behaviours and habits around food along the way.

### **Term 3- Research project and practical coaching and officiating**

Each pupil will be tasked with producing their own individualised research project in an area of interest from across the course. They will develop their research skills and critical thinking to help evaluate and analyse an area of interest.

Practical coaching and officiating will also give the pupils an opportunity to develop a sporting interest other than solely performing. Pupils will be taught how to coach and officiate in a number of sports with an opportunity to gain an official qualification.

**Philip Davies**  
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## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Can I choose all three modern foreign languages?***

Yes, absolutely. If you are a talented linguist then you should feel no hesitation in immersing yourself in all three languages for the entirety of your Fourth Form.

### ***I don't like modern foreign languages, can I do three subjects that don't include modern languages?***

No. It is a curriculum requirement at Merchant Taylors' that every boy does at least one modern foreign language through to GCSE. Of course, many boys take more than one language.

### ***I like more than three of the optional subjects. Can I squeeze in four or five?***

No. There are only so many teaching slots in the timetable and as such we are only able to offer boys three of the optional subjects.

### ***Are there extra-curricular options that I can pursue even if I don't choose a subject in the Fourth Form?***

Yes, there are a vast array of extra-curricular options at Taylors' and you can be involved even if you don't study the subject. The most obvious of these are our extensive Games programme, our opportunities in Music and the chances to perform in Drama. It is true though that if you wish to do languages, then the principal place to really do these is in the classroom, although we do have a foreign language cooking club (Linguachef) which many Fourth Formers love.

### ***Are you able to guarantee that the preferences I have indicated will be able to be fulfilled?***

No. We do our best to meet every requested preference, but we are not able to guarantee it.

### ***Who should I talk to about my choices?***

These are pupil choices first and foremost – they are the ones taking the classes! However, parents will certainly have an informed opinion and pupils should discuss and agree choices with them. Pupils should also talk to their current subject teachers for their thoughts on taking a given subject.

### ***How will my subject preferences be registered?***

Included in the covering email to this booklet is a link to our system where you will be asked to register your preferences.





