

Earlscliffe (Sussex Summer Schools Ltd)

CURRICULUM POLICY

Rationale and Aims

Earlscliffe (SSS) is an independent college (for 14-19yr olds) with an academic curriculum and our standards and expectations are high. We concentrate through the curriculum on developing students' individual abilities and confidence. We are not an academically-selective school, although many of our students will have taken mathematics and English tests prior to joining us as part of our admissions process.

Curriculum Combinations

Earlscliffe offers a traditional approach to A Level subject choices and levels, with the main aim being entry to Russell Group/1994 Group universities. Due to the nature of the college timetable, we do have some restrictions on subject choices but may offer cross curricular combinations where appropriate. The following subject options outline the main GCE A Level curriculum combinations that are available at Earlscliffe:

Block A: Mathematics; Geography; History or Photography

Block B: Chemistry; Art; Business or Economics

Block C: Biology; Physics; Psychology or Government & Politics

Block D: Extra subjects – Further Mathematics; English Literature

Own language – All if available

IELTS tuition for non-native speakers without English GCSE

Timetabling and Tuition

We teach in small groups with normally no more than nine students in each class, except in certain circumstances, ie pre-exam preparation lessons. All the students in a given class are prepared for the same exam from the same board on the same date. The small size of the groups ensures that each student receives individual attention whilst at the same time gaining the benefits of learning in a group environment.

We believe that frequent, high-quality teaching contact time is essential to A Level success. During the working day we prefer our students to be in lessons rather than in so-called "Study" or "Free" periods: those are mostly allocated to evenings and weekends. Our allocation of 6hrs 45 mins teaching time per main A Level subject per week is key to our aim – academic success through rigour and continuous support.

This notwithstanding, Wednesday afternoons are given over to sporting, cultural and community service activities, organised by non-teaching support staff, unless engaged in 'Optional Extra' lessons.

Students come to Earlscliffe on the understanding that they will work hard. Tutors set **effective homework** that reinforces subject content and subject specific skills development.

The following is a guide:

- at least 4½ hours per week for each AS/Year 12 subject
- at least 6 hours per week for each A2/Year 13 subject
- At least 2 hours per week in each subject (and more for English) for ITY/Year 11

Some students will come to Earlscliffe from overseas at 15yrs old (and, rarely, at 14 yrs old) and will need to be prepared for A-Level. This is achieved through offering this minority of students our **International Transition Year** course which offers English Language, a Social Science, a Natural Science and Mathematics as a core curriculum. **GCSE and IGCSE syllabi form the foundation of the curriculum** delivered to students on this course. ITY students may come to Earlscliffe with the aim of progressing on to A Level courses, but also to improve their English Language proficiency through the study of academic subjects in English. Most ITY students (ordinarily one year students) will sit a limited number of GCSEs at the end of their ITY year. All ITY students sit the IELTS exam. In the Trinity Term some students join ITY for between four weeks and one term. ITY students are also offered a choice of creative, artistic and technical options to supplement the core every Wednesday afternoons (and at other times throughout the week) as part of our wider "Sports, Culture and Service" programme, which is not delivered in formal lesson format, and may not be supervised by teachers. Students may lead some sessions, ie football. ITY is broadly equivalent to UK Years 10 & 11, or KS4.

A minority of students may study for the new ('16-'17) **ATHE Diploma in Business & Management** (QCF, Level 3; equal to two full A-levels) as a Year 13 alternative. This course provides a pathway to UK university entry, especially when combined with other qualifications. This course is designed for students who wish to concentrate on the study of business, and who generally perform better when assessed continuously rather than in lengthy, synoptic exams. Likewise, one or two students at the most may enrol on our **University Foundation Year** (for EU students), and attend Year 12 or Year 13 GCE A-level classes, but undergo internal assessment.

The large majority of Year 13 students complete the AQA **Extended Project Qualification**.

Our PHSE and Citizenship sessions (including anti-bullying guidance) at selected twice-weekly Forum sessions and in our Orientation week at the beginning of the academic year are delivered to both KS4 and KS5 students.

Earlscliffe is committed to providing Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural guidance and opportunities to all students both within the academic curriculum and outside it.

Tutoring System

Earlscliffe's tutoring system provides a close, friendly and constructive monitoring of students' progress. The Group Tutors are readily accessible to students and report to the Deputy Head. The Deputy Head and Head Teacher are readily available to discuss both academic and pastoral concerns.

Assessment, Reporting and Recording

We aim to use assessment both formatively and summatively within the curriculum with the express aim of evaluating students' progress and informing the future planning of both teaching and learning as a part of the process of continuous improvement. Individual subject tutors use their ongoing formative assessment which includes marking, discussions and feedback to pupils, to affirm what students know and can do, thereby motivating and encouraging them. This information is also used to diagnose weaknesses and identify positive steps to remedy them, including setting targets.

TRaC™

Key to Earlscliffe's assessment and target setting strategy is our **Test, Rank and Coach** system of weekly, competitive testing in each A Level subject every Monday. Tutors set the papers based on the week's work, mark them and return scripts graded (according to A Level criteria), ranked (according to class performance) and with coaching comments and notes for continuous improvement. These **TRaC™** scores are posted on the Deputy Head's Noticeboard each Thursday morning and communicated to parents. Cumulative rankings are recorded.

There are end of term examinations in the Michaelmas Term; mock exams at the end of the Hilary Term, and end of year ITY exams (for non-public examinees) and public exams.

End of term reports are hand-written by teaching staff and commented on by our Deputy Head and Head Teacher. The term's **TRaC™** scores are sent home along with exam results (except for the Trinity Term).

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Curriculum

Monitoring and evaluation are essential aspects of the college's aim to raise achievement. Within the curriculum, this involves focusing on teaching and learning, the performance of pupils, the effectiveness of teachers and hence the standard of achievement across the whole college. The tutor review and development programme allows for different degrees of scrutiny and analysis for different areas of the curriculum at different times. The process of monitoring and evaluating in the curriculum has much in common with the process of assessment for the students of the college. We believe that the process should be open and shared. The purpose of monitoring and evaluating should be clear to all involved. It should be seen as a supportive and developmental process aimed at improving standards throughout the college. Tutors should be aware of the criteria for judging success and this is contained on the standard pro-formas

for lesson observation. Teachers are expected to self-evaluate their own performance and that of the school, as facilitated through Inset and other staff meetings.

Teachers will be asked to review exam results post-August and to formulate and action, with the support of the school's leaders, an Improvement Plan by 01 September each year accordingly.

The college is committed to widening access to its curriculum and activities to students who may have a special educational need, including a disability (Equality Act 2010)