



EARLSTON HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM POLICY

1 General

Session 2009-2010 saw the move from an eight-period day (period length 40 minutes) to a six-period day (period length 54 minutes) for the following reasons :

- educational research suggests greater learning value in terms of motivation and concentration from a period length around 50 minutes compared to 40 minutes (often too short for certain tasks) and double periods of 80 minutes (sometimes too long to maintain concentration);
- periods of 40-minute length were considered too short for many CfE activities involving active learning and cross-curricular work;
- the increase in the number of classes associated with a rising roll made the identification of double periods (80 minutes) on the timetable increasingly difficult;
- traditionally, two columns on both the S3 and S4 choice sheets received five 40-minute periods instead of the standard four periods, by annual rotation - again, the rising roll was making this extremely hard to timetable and there was no educational justification for it;
- the 54-minute period was chosen as making the most efficient use of staff time in line with the McCrone agreement.

The introduction of Curriculum for Excellence has required revisions to curriculum policy. While discussions are ongoing with regard to developments in S2 and S3, the emphasis in curricular change for session 2010-2011 is concentrated on S1.

2 First Year (S1)

The S1 curriculum is laid out as follows with subject followed by number of periods in brackets :

English (4)
Mathematics (4)

French (3)

PE (3)

Geography (2)
History (1)
Modern Studies (1)
RME (1)

Science (4)
Art & Design (2)
CDT (1)
Home Economics (2)
Music (1)

Computing/PSE (1)

Class size in English, Mathematics and all practical subjects is a maximum of 20. Setting is operated in Mathematics classes through pupils being timetabled in either third-year or half-year groups depending on the size of the intake.

To provide added opportunities for choice and challenge, in line with CfE, *challenge options* will be introduced in session 2010-2011. This requires the identification of one or more periods on the timetable which will be suspended for three weeks. During that time, teachers of S1 classes (joined by any other available interested staff, SMT, visitors from external agencies etc) will offer options in knowledge and skills totally divorced from the normal timetable and from which pupils will choose. These same challenge options can be repeated at any time in the year with pupils making fresh choices. This method of providing three-period blocks will be manageable and timetable-neutral while providing all pupils with valuable additions to their curriculum.

Literacy and numeracy will be promoted by the creation, for every S1 class, of *literacy and numeracy trios*. For literacy, each group of pupils will have three staff (their English teacher plus two others eg History and RME) and similarly for numeracy (their Mathematics teacher plus two others eg Science and CDT). These three staff will work together to maintain each pupil's literacy or numeracy folder and identify particular pieces to go into the folder; while prime responsibility will lie with each trio, any member of staff can contribute pieces to the literacy and numeracy folders. The creation of the trios should ensure that serious attention is given to the development and evidence-gathering of literacy and numeracy in all pupils while keeping the system under control and manageable.

3 Second Year (S2)

The S2 curriculum is laid out as follows with subject followed by number of periods in brackets :

English (4)	Science (3)
Mathematics (4)	Art & Design (1)
	CDT (2)
French (1)	Home Economics (1)
German (2)	Music (2)
PE (2)	
Geography (1)	Business IT/PSE (1)
History (2)	
Modern Studies (2)	
RME (2)	

Class size in English, Mathematics and all practical subjects is a maximum of 20.

Setting opportunities are provided in both English and Mathematics classes through pupils being timetabled in either third-year or half-year groups depending on the size of the intake.

4 Third Year (S3) and Fourth Year (S4)

The S3 and S4 curriculum is based mainly on Standard Grades although Intermediate courses are offered by a few departments as being more appropriate.

The normal composition of the S2 choice sheet for study in S3 and S4 is as follows:

Compulsory courses :

English Standard Grade	4 periods
Mathematics Standard Grade	4 periods
Personal and Social Education	1 period
Core PE	2 periods
Core RME	1 period

Optional courses (pupils normally take six for three periods each) :

Biology Standard Grade	French Standard Grade
Chemistry Standard Grade	German Standard Grade
Chemistry Intermediate 1	Spanish Standard Grade
Physics Intermediate 1 and 2	
Art & Design Standard Grade	Geography Standard Grade
	History Standard Grade
Drama Standard Grade	Modern Studies Standard Grade
Music Standard Grade	Religious Studies Standard Grade
Craft & Design Standard Grade	Physical Education Standard Grade
Graphic Communication Standard Grade	
Technological Studies Standard Grade	Administration Standard Grade
	Business Management Standard Grade
Home Economics Standard Grade	Computing Standard Grade
Hospitality Intermediate 1	
	ASDAN courses (offered to selected pupils by SfL department)

The principle has always been to maximise pupil choice in S3 and S4. To this end, many optional courses appear on the choice sheet in two or even three columns to maximise flexibility and permit more combinations of choices.

In addition, while a tried and tested choice sheet is offered to S2 pupils in the first instance, it is always changed after choices are made. Classes are added, removed or changed to different columns wherever possible to address over-subscriptions and allow the maximum number of pupils to retain their original choices.

Attempts are made to maximise information and advice to both S2 pupils and parents before choices are finalised. These include

- timing S2 reports towards the start of the choice procedure;

- teachers indicating potential for S3/S4 courses on the S2 reports;
- guidance staff reading and adding their own summary comments to the S2 reports and then discussing reports individually with pupils;
- an information evening on choices and future pathways for parents;
- the issue of course choice booklets which explain procedures and describe all courses on offer;
- the S2 parents evening when parents can consult teachers to measure progress so as to inform choices.

The facilities available in the new school make the provision of vocational courses more viable. It is intended to offer a course in hairdressing to S3 pupils in session 2010-2011.

5 Fifth Year (S5) and Sixth Year (S6)

As with the S3/S4 curriculum, efforts over the years have gone into making the S5/S6 curriculum as student-centred as possible by

- adjusting and developing the choice sheet from year to year in the light of student choices;
- steadily increasing the number of courses on offer;
- maximising the number of course combinations by offering the more popular courses in more than one column of the choice sheet;
- increasing the number of Advanced Higher courses which are fully (or almost fully) timetabled.

Courses normally on offer to students at choice time comprise the following :

English Advanced Higher
English Higher
English Intermediate 2
Media Studies Intermediate 2

Mathematics Advanced Higher
Mathematics Higher
Mathematics Intermediate 2

French Higher/Intermediate 2
German Higher/Intermediate 2
Spanish Higher/Intermediate 2

Geography Advanced Higher
Geography Higher
Travel & Tourism Intermediate 2

History Advanced Higher
History Higher

Art & Design Advanced Higher
Art & Design Higher/Intermediate 2
Art & Design Post-Higher Portfolio

Biology Advanced Higher
Biology Higher
Human Biology Higher
Biology Intermediate 2

Chemistry Advanced Higher
Chemistry Higher
Chemistry Intermediate 2

Physics Advanced Higher
Physics Higher
Physics Intermediate 2

Home Economics (Lifestyle) Higher
Hospitality Intermediate 2

Modern Studies Advanced Higher
Modern Studies Higher

RMPS Higher

Business Management Advanced Higher
Business Management Higher
Administration Higher/Intermediate 2
Information Systems Higher/Int 2

Physical Education Advanced Higher
Physical Education Higher
Physical Education Intermediate 2
Basic Sports Coaching (unit)
Treatment of Sports Injuries (unit)

Music Advanced Higher
Music Higher/Intermediate 2
Drama Advanced Higher/Higher

Product Design Higher/Intermediate 2
Graphic Communication Higher/Int 2
Technological Studies Higher/Int 2
Woodworking Skills Intermediate 2

All students in S5 and S6 have two periods of Personal and Social Education; this is the only compulsory subject on the senior curriculum.

Two periods of optional (leisure) PE are offered to S5 and S6 students; the emphasis is very much on PE staff facilitating activities requested by students.