



Education & Children's Services
Improving life chances for all



Curriculum Rationale and Learning Hours

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Agenda

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- Fife Picture
- Rationale for Kirkcaldy High School
- Benefits for learners
- Next Steps
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National Picture – Curriculum Rationale

In Secondary Education, there are two distinct phases: The Broad General Education and The Senior Phase.

The aims of Curriculum for Excellence are to prepare our young people to take their place in society. As a result, the primary focus is on 'raising attainment and achievement for all young people'

Curriculum for Excellence states that every young person should:

- experience a traditionally broad Scottish curriculum that develops skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, with a sustained focus on literacy and numeracy, that encourages an active, healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyle and that builds an appreciation of Scotland and its place in the world;
- benefit from learning and teaching that strikes a balance between equipping them with the skills for passing exams and skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work;
- have their learning and achievements recognised by an assessment system that supports the curriculum rather than leads it and ensures that their transition into qualifications is smooth.



National Picture – Learning Hours

- In March 2023, the Scottish Government published a consultation paper - “Prescribing the minimum annual number of learning hours”
- Learning hours are the period of teaching that pupils receive within the school day – do not include time spent at breakfast clubs, lunch and other breaks, or after school activities run by schools
- The majority of secondary schools across Scotland are delivering 27.5 learning hours per week
- The Scottish Government proposal was to set in law the minimum number of learning hours provided in public and grant aided schools – Education Scotland Act 2016.
- Fife is one of 7 local authorities not delivering 27.5 hours of learning per week across all schools, for secondary age pupils



Fife Picture

Education & Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26

Fife Education Service aims to deliver equity and equality of opportunity for all learners across Fife, as reflected in our Directorate Plan 2023-26

The priorities include improving wider achievement and improving engagement.

We believe in moving to a more common timetable in schools in order that we can open up more opportunities between schools and across Fife.



Fife Picture – Learning Hours

- Fife has reviewed the learning hours across the secondary sector
- The number of defined learning hours delivered across the 18 secondary schools varies
 - 4 of 18 secondary schools are delivering 26.5 - 27.5 learning hours per week (with registration)
 - 14 of 18 secondary schools are delivering between 26.25 – 27.5 hours per week (without registration)
- There are different start and finish times for the school day, across Fife – to support registered bus transport services



Rationale for Change – Kirkcaldy High School

- To deliver equity and equality of opportunity for all learners
- To provide the opportunity for our school to align the timetable with other schools in the area and/or across Fife
- To provide all young people with a greater curricular offer and support consortium arrangements across schools
- To provide increased opportunities for pupils currently unable to study subjects that are on offer at another school
- To manage staffing shortages in some curricular areas (e.g. Business Education, Computing Studies, Home Economics, CDT and Mathematics) – which are affecting all secondary schools and local authorities
- To provide the opportunity for the school to increase learning in specific curricular areas/subjects and/or to enhance PSE (Pupil Support Education) or PE (Physical Education)
- To standardise the period length at 50 minutes, lunch 40 minutes and break 15 minutes.



Curriculum Rationale – Kirkcaldy High School

The curriculum is designed to provide all youngsters with the opportunity to develop the 4 capacities, literacy, numeracy, health wellbeing, skills and experiences, laying a solid foundation into the senior phase and beyond.

- Our curriculum rationale is based upon the values of **respect for self, respect for others and respect for learning**. This includes:
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 - *providing opportunities for all pupils to develop their full potential*
 - *providing opportunities for our young people to develop and demonstrate the skills and values of perseverance, ambition, creativity and empathy*
 - *supporting all pupils by removing barriers to learning through planned curriculum experiences*
 - *providing relevant, personalised, engaging and enjoyable learning experiences, including opportunities for a depth and breadth of learning*
 - *developing skills for learning, life and work as an integral part of learning*
 - *providing a range of curriculum pathways, including relevant learning opportunities about the world of work, leading to successful achievement and a positive destination after school*
 - *developing a sense of self within our community and how this supports others through a range of achievements and attitudes*
 - *providing opportunity for consortia arrangements with other local schools and with other schools across the local authority (our school day will be broadly in line with other Kirkcaldy schools and around 70% in line across the local authority).*



Curriculum Rationale – Kirkcaldy High School

Broad General Education

Students experience breadth, depth, challenge and personalisation through S1-S3, laying a firm foundation into the senior phase.

- In S1, the curriculum will be re-designed to meet the needs of all pupils and reflect the world around us. This will include the redevelopment of each curriculum area with a focus on providing: a clear vision and purpose for each area; more connected learning opportunities; more personalisation and choice through elective programmes; more planned targeted support experiences embedded into the core curriculum. For some pupils, their curriculum will have a more proportionate and targeted focus on literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing as appropriate to their needs.
- In S2, the curriculum will be re-designed to prepare pupils for the end of the S1-3 Broad General Education phase and will include additional opportunities for personalisation and choice through elective programmes. Targeted tutorial support experiences will be embedded in the curriculum to support areas of development, enhancing pupils' progress into S3.
- In S3, the curriculum will focus on finishing the Broad General Education and beginning the necessary learning for the S4-6 Senior Phase. Pupils in S3 will have increased learning time in most subjects and will be allocated the same amount of time (4 periods) in all 7 subjects. Progression into S4 will continue to be enhanced through the continuation of all 7 subjects into S4, providing the opportunities for all pupils to have their S1-3 learning experiences recognised through qualifications.



Curriculum Rationale – Kirkcaldy High School

Senior Phase

- In S4, pupils will continue with their S3 learning experiences. This will be a coherent experience maintaining the same balance of learning time (4 periods) across all 7 subjects in S3 and S4, enhancing progression through the curriculum. Wider curriculum experiences will be on offer to provide a more diverse pathway for some learners, including opportunities to experience outdoor learning, life skills, preparation for employment and personal development.
- All young people in S3/4 will experience wider achievement opportunities through a single period of delivery based on their chosen pathway.
- In S5/6, the curriculum will be enhanced to include additional elective programmes, providing pupils with a choice of wider skills and achievement curriculum options; these will be designed to enhance pupils' intended positive destination after school. Pupils in S5/6 will have an additional targeted tutorial support class / enhancement. This class will respond to tracking report information and will support pupils in subjects where they need extra development time to focus on key course assessments.



Benefits for Learners

- Increased opportunity for pupils to study subjects of their choice that are on offer at an alternative school – using digital technologies to undertake specific subject choices
- Improved, sustained positive destinations, as young people are given a wider range of experiences
- Standardised learning hours with the rest of Fife and within our Department of Additional Support classes, ensuring equity across the school(s)
- An increase in the time spent in school for learners – all pupils will have 27.5 hours learning hours per week
- Reduction in the lunch break, to 40 minutes, to support the work of promoting positive behaviours and reducing incidents of violence and aggression



Asymmetric Week

- 27 of 32 local authorities currently operate a common asymmetric week across their secondary schools.
- 5 local authorities (including Fife) do not have an asymmetric week across all of their secondary schools
- In Fife, 5 of 18 secondary schools currently operate an asymmetric week where pupils have an early finish on a Friday afternoon
- An asymmetric week **is not** being proposed for all secondary schools at this time - this is a local decision and will require consultation with school bus contracts
- However, moving to an asymmetric week could stimulate some wider opportunities for young people:
 - enabling access to enhanced extra-curricular activities, thereby, improving their mental and physical health and wellbeing
 - senior phases of S5 and S6 having an opportunity to use Friday pm time to access volunteering or to seek part-time employment, contributing to life-skills and the local community.
 - S6 pupils having time for self- study and online learning as part of their transition to higher education, further education and employment, further developing their independent learning skills and self-motivation.



Asymmetric Week

- At present professional learning activities are undertaken at the end of the school day. The asymmetric week allows the planning of a wider range of rich opportunities for staff to enhance their professional knowledge and practice.
- More opportunities for professional learning activities through online or in-person collaboration with colleagues within or outwith our own school increasing levels of staff engagement and motivation. It has the potential to provide richer opportunities for professional dialogue, collaborative working, sharing of practice and moderation of standards and expectations. All leading to more confident, skilled and knowledgeable staff, ultimately, leading to better outcomes for our learners.
- The structure of an asymmetric week provides the opportunity to enhance the delivery of high-quality career long professional learning opportunities for staff, in line with the GTCS ([Professional Standards and Professional Learning - The GTCS](#)). It is well understood that when a wide range of high-quality, sustained professional learning is undertaken, teachers and support staff are more likely to inspire pupils and provide high-quality teaching and learning experiences, enabling learners to achieve their best.
- Feedback from other neighbouring Local Authorities confirms positive staff feedback on professional learning organised around the asymmetric week.



Next Steps

- Pupils, parents/carers, staff and any other interested stakeholders are asked to provide any feedback to Kirkcaldyhs.Enquiries@fife.gov.uk using the feedback sheet provided within the consultation paper or use the Microsoft form: <https://forms.office.com/e/TBhGQne0MY>
- Comments will be reviewed and taken into account when finalising the curriculum rationale and the learning hours / shape of school week
- The final model will be communicated to all pupils, parents/carers, staff and wider stakeholders.