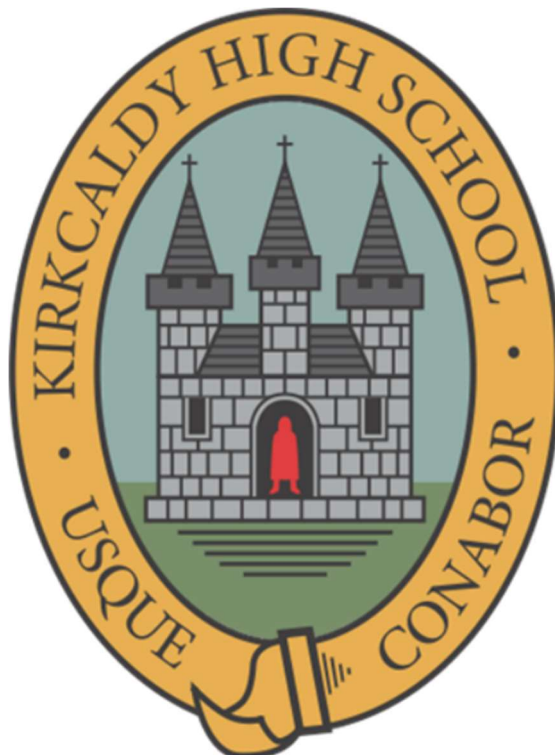


Kirkcaldy High School

Curriculum Rationale



Getting it Right in Kirkcaldy High School



Curriculum Rationale

Article 29, UNCRC: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full

Created by:	Date Created:	Review Date:
S Hamilton	October 2025	August 2026



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Introduction

It is important that we have a clear rationale behind our curriculum as we want all our young people at Kirkcaldy High School to experience a high-quality curriculum supporting their needs, maximising their attainment, releasing their potential, and hence ensuring positive post-school destinations.

Our current curriculum design has been shaped by key national frameworks and reports, including *How Good Is Our School? 4*, *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum*, the *Muir Report (2021)*, the *Hayward Review (2023)*, and the *Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC)*. Central to our approach is the development of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence—**Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens, and Effective Contributors**. These capacities reflect our commitment to nurturing the whole child and underpin our ambition to help every young person thrive—academically, emotionally, and socially. Our curriculum is built on the principles of being **Ambitious, Inclusive, and Supportive**, ensuring that all learners are empowered to reach their full potential in ways that reflect their unique talents and aspirations.

The following recommendations are key drivers for our curriculum development:

- a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing at every stage (BTC3)
- more opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for all young people at every stage (BTC3)
- Digital learning must be at the core of Scottish education so that all learners in Scotland have choice, opportunity, and security in their lives, both now and in the future. (All Learners in Scotland Matter 2023)

Our School Context

Our vision:

At Kirkcaldy High School, our vision is to support every young person to develop their talents and strive to meet their potential—academically, emotionally, and socially—through high expectations, supportive relationships, and shared success. Founded in respect, inspired by ambition, and united in community, we live our motto: *Usque Conabor* — ‘I will strive to the utmost.’”

Dream big. Work hard. Be kind.

We aim to:

- Ensure that every young person’s rights and needs are met.
- Support every young person to improve wellbeing and health.
- Engage every young person in learning, regardless of barriers faced.
- Maximise every young person’s potential and talent through improved attainment and achievement, including in literacy and numeracy.
- Support every young person to gain the skills and qualifications needed to succeed in a positive destination after school.



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Our values are:

Community (Responsible Citizens)	Ambition (Successful Learners)	Respect (Confident Individuals)
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- We are a large secondary school with a current roll of approximately 1460 learners. This allows a wide variety of courses and levels to be offered within each curricular area.
- Our catchment area extends from Redcraigs in the west to Hendry Road in the east and includes the Valley and Templehall areas of the town, as well as Dunnikier Estate and the new developments to the north of Chapel Level.
- Our cluster of primary schools are Capshard, Fair Isle, Torbain and Valley, although each year we receive many placing requests from other parts of the town, especially Smeaton and Gallatown. We also attract significant numbers from Cardenden.
- 24% of our learners come from SIMD 1 or 2 and 53% live in SIMDs 1- 4. We also have 25% in SIMD 9 or 10.
- Our FME is 24% and the percentage of children under 16 living in poverty is typically 3 or 4% higher than the Fife average. 62% of our young people have an additional support need (ASN).
- We have a successful Department of Additional Support, with 5 classes totaling 48 pupils over a full range of S1 to S6.
- We work closely with our Parent/Carer council and meet once per term. At each meeting, we listen to the concerns raised and share planning around our school improvement priorities and plans. We actively seek the views of the council and use these views to shape next steps.
- We want our young people to feel valued and heard and so we have a strong commitment to pupil voice. (Focus groups, questionnaires, learning ambassadors etc.)
- Our PEF funding is £227,850 and we have used this to invest in the following targeted initiatives: Increase attendance and engagement, set up an Inclusion Hub and improve numeracy and literacy.
- By the end of S3, most learners achieve Level 3 in reading, writing, talking and numeracy. Most learners achieve National 5 Literacy by the end of S4 and the majority achieve National 5 Numeracy.
- We have built very positive partnership working with Fife College and the Community Trade Hub, offering additional curricular experiences. We have also increased our partnership working to include, but is not limited to, Police Scotland, Safer Communities, Mentors in Violence Preventions (MVP) and Kirkcaldy Sport & Leisure Alliance (KSLA).
- 80% of our S4 stayed at school for session 25-26, which is 3% more than previous years. 50.1% of our young people in S4 in 2023 have stayed on to S6 in 2025. This is the first time we have exceeded 50%.
- Destinations figures have steadily increased between 2021 and 2023, because of improved partnership working. The percentage of school leavers going into a positive destination in 2024 was 93.5%, which is slightly higher than the national average of 93.1%.



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- Our destination data shows that approximately 35% of our young people go on to further education and 25% go to university. The percentage of leavers going into employment at KHS is higher than the Fife and national average.
- During session 2024–25, we proudly achieved the Gold SCQF Ambassador Award, recognising our dedication to broadening the curriculum and offering a diverse range of flexible learning opportunities beyond traditional qualifications.
- We have a wide variety of wider achievement opportunities such as: Active Schools Young Leader, Duke of Edinburgh, Best of You Programme, First Chances, Lift Off, First Aid, Saltire etc.
- Building positive relationships is extremely important to us and we believe relationships should be characterised by respect, kindness, and compassion. All adults and young people have a responsibility to help each other to develop positive attitudes and behaviour, and to prevent bullying and allow everyone to learn.
- We have a strong ethos of equality, rights, and inclusion and this has contributed towards KHS being one of the first schools in Scotland to achieve the Gold Rights Respecting Schools Award. Our ongoing work in this area has resulted in the school recently being reaccredited with this award.

Developing our Curriculum Rationale

In session 2022-23, we consulted staff, learners, parents/carers, and partners on our curriculum rationale. We focussed on the uniqueness of our school and discussed strengths and development needs around our curriculum. We also contacted local employers to get their perspective on what they felt we should be focussing on in terms of skills development.

Throughout session 2024–25, we collaborated with our community to review and refresh our vision, values, and aims. As a result, our Curriculum Rationale has been updated to reflect this shared direction. The infographic on the following page is a summary of our Curriculum Rationale, which has been shared with stakeholders.



SeaStory Project Based Learning Experience for S2



Matilda – School Show June 2025



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Transforming Our Curriculum

In October 2023, we launched our curriculum change consultation, involving all stakeholders – “Transforming our curriculum...Creating our future...Improving life chances”.

We proposed a curriculum rationale that reflected the values, diversity, history, community, and geographical context of our school. Based on this rationale, the following changes to our learning experiences were proposed and accepted:

Changes to our Curriculum	Rationale for Change
Increased learning time for all young people moving from 27 hours to 27.5 hours (an additional 30 minutes per week).	We were able to deliver the national entitlements of PSE and RME to our learners in S5/6. All learners benefitted from increased learning time. In response to learner feedback, we have introduced a change for session 2025–26. S5/6 core now includes an element of choice. While PSE remains mandatory, students can now choose RME and/or PE as part of their core curriculum.



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The introduction of a 33-period week to provide more efficient blocks of learning with a more balanced curriculum and better progression. Our school week is now aligned with the other secondary schools in Kirkcaldy allowing for consortia arrangements and more collegiate working between the schools.	In S3/4 learners were not getting equal learning time across their elective subjects. Improved efficiency allowed us to offer additional courses that are more appropriate and relevant for our young people.
Mandatory targeted tutorial support classes were introduced into the core curriculum for the senior phase in 2024-25. Following learner feedback, a change was introduced for session 2025-26, and although this continues to be mandatory for S4, it now forms part of the core choice available to S5/6 students.	Study support classes offered outside the core curriculum were not attracting the young people who needed them the most. By introducing a timetabled study support period in a chosen subject, we hope to improve attainment.
We will ensure our young people will continue to experience their BGE entitlements until the end of S3	Previously young people in S2 were given free subject choices with no guidance/recommendation around their BGE entitlements, this resulted in a significant narrowing of the curriculum for many learners in S3.
We have developed BGE planning documents to help improve the quality of learning experiences across the curriculum. Our S1 was developed session 2024-25, S2 is being developed session 2025-26 and S3 will be developed session 2026-27.	Previously, there was a lack of consistency in planning expectations within the BGE, resulting in learners not receiving the same high-quality curricular experiences throughout the school. These Learning Programmes aim to identify naturally occurring IDL opportunities and facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge across the curriculum.
We have introduced a wider achievements period into S3, where young people can gain additional skills and qualifications through courses such as Duke of Edinburgh, Survival Cookery, Radio Broadcasting etc. Our S5/6 learners also have the opportunity of gaining a Tenancy qualification through PSE and have the choice of attaining an Employability Award, or Wellbeing Award as part of their core periods.	Previously, wider achievement opportunities were limited to smaller groups of young people and were not universally available. Due to the rise in mental health issues, we are introducing the Wellbeing Award. The Tenancy course was selected based on learner feedback indicating a desire for skills and knowledge related to managing a home, including financial management.
We have introduced the Fresh Start Project, which is a catch-up literacy initiative for young people who are at risk of falling behind their peers. For session 2025-26, we have created an additional S1 class for these learners, so that they can get the support they need across the curriculum.	Typically, we have around 6% of our S1 who are working on early or first level literacy. Without intervention, this group of young people will struggle to access the curriculum.



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Our young people furthest from achievement will have support through our STEPS programme to support them to gain qualifications, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy.	Approximately 8% of our young people are not gaining at least National 3 Literacy and Numeracy by the end of S4. Earlier identification and intervention will hopefully reduce this number.
We have introduced a period of Numeracy and Literacy for all S1 as we understand that numeracy and literacy are core to all aspects of learning, teaching, and skills development.	We want our young people to recognise that literacy and numeracy skills are fundamental for accessing other areas of learning and are key skills for life and work.
We have changed our curricular offering to provide pathways that are appropriate for our young people, collaborating with partners to offer subjects/courses relevant to our local labour market intelligence. (Eg. Hair & Beauty, Childcare, Barista, work placements etc.)	We want to make sure that we can offer more flexible pathways, which help to develop personal attributes, skills, and experiences alongside the offering of the more 'traditional academia' pathways.
We have allocated significant time to new leadership posts such as DHT and PT2 Raising Attainment & Achievement and PT1 Continuous Improvement (L&T) For session 2025-26, we have additional leadership roles such as: PT Employability, Equalities and Inclusion Coordinator and PBL/IDL Coordinator.	We envision these leadership roles as pivotal in advancing our curriculum goals. Our aim is to make learning engaging, enjoyable, and conducive to maximising achievement. We believe these leaders will collaborate closely with faculties to bring this vision to life.

Our Curriculum Structure

From session 2024-25 our school week as consisted of:

- 33 periods of 50-minute lessons Monday to Friday
- 7 periods per day from Monday to Thursday
- 5 periods on Friday
- Total learning time is 27.5 hours

Monday to Thursday	Times	Friday	Times
Period 1	8.40 – 9.30	Period 1	8.40 – 9.30
Period 2	9.30 – 10.20	Period 2	9.30 – 10.20
INTERVAL (15 MINS)	10.20 – 10.35	INTERVAL (15 MINS)	10.20 – 10.35
Period 3	10.35 – 11.25	Period 3	10.35 – 11.25
Period 4	11.25 – 12.15	Period 4	11.25 – 12.15
Period 5	12.15 – 1.05	Period 5	12.15 – 1.05
LUNCH (40 MINS)	1.05 – 1.45		
Period 6	1.45 – 2.35		
Period 7	2.35 – 3.25		



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Our curriculum is structured as per the KHS Curriculum Overview (See Appendix B), underpinned by the following principles:

- We have placed the four contexts of learning at the heart of our curriculum planning. A great example of this was our successful project-based learning experience with S2 in June 2025. Learners reported that the experience helped them strengthen key skills—particularly in collaboration and creativity.
- We have prioritised our curriculum to allow us to implement the national entitlements, including 1 + 2 languages within S1 and S2.
- We are supporting all pupils by removing barriers to learning through planned curriculum experiences and aim to increase opportunities for young people to feel part of our community and to be active citizens. (Eg. Volunteering Award, Saltire, DofE etc.)
- We support our learners to become **successful learners** by fostering **ambition** and setting high expectations for all. Through engaging, challenging, and meaningful learning experiences, we encourage curiosity, motivation, and a drive to achieve their full potential.
- We support learners to become **confident individuals** who show **respect** for themselves and others by encouraging safe, healthy choices and promoting a positive mindset through programmes such as PSE, MVP, and Tenancy.
- We encourage learners to become **responsible citizens** who show respect for others and their environment by building positive relationships and fostering a strong sense of **community** and belonging.
- We aim to create young people who are resilient, hard-working and realise the importance of transferable skills. (See Appendix A for our KHS Skills Framework)



S4-6 pupils attending Fife Council Building Services for an apprenticeship inspiration event.



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Our Curriculum and Course Choice Process

Our learners in S1 and S2 follow a Broad General Education providing them with a wide range of knowledge, skills, and experiences. Their learning time consists of a range of subjects across all 8 curricular areas. Each curricular area is broken down into experiences and outcomes, describing the expectations for learning and progression.

Our learners in S3 will continue to experience subjects from each of the 8 curricular areas, however they will start to specialise within each curricular area. The learning undertaken in S3 will provide strong foundations for their subject qualifications in S4. In S3, learners will study the following mandatory subjects: English, Mathematics, Health & Wellbeing (PE/SE) and Religious & Moral Education. They will also select a subject from each of the following curricular areas: Science, Social Subjects, Expressive Arts and Technologies and a final choice from any curricular area.

Our learners in S4 move into the Senior Phase where they will have the opportunity to take a range of qualifications based on their subject choices from S3.

Our learners in S5 are recommended to continue studying 5 subjects within their curricular pathway from the 7 subjects studied in S4. They are also recommended to continue studying a literacy based subject and unless they have already achieved at least a Nat 5 Numeracy, a numeracy-based subject also.

Our learners in S6 will choose 5 subjects, one which may be a study column where there is an expectation that they will complete a wider achievement award.



Some of our Horticulture learners proudly showing some of the produce they have grown in school.



S6 studying Business Management, learning about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and Fair-Trade products when visiting The Chocolatarium.



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Course choice timeline 2025-26

Course choice process	Place and Date
Mock course choice Parents/Carers Evening	30 th October – Teams Meeting
S2, S4 and S5 will complete their mock course choice	December - during SE with guidance teacher
Pathways Evening for Parents/Carers	2nd February – 5pm to 7pm in Assembly Hall
Course choice information issued to parents/carers	Week beginning 2nd Feb – sent via Groupcall email
S2 will complete final course choice	10 th February – with guidance teacher in school
S4 will complete final course choice	16 th February – with guidance teacher in school
S5 will complete final course choice	3 rd March – with guidance teacher in school

Our Curriculum Development for 2025-26

- We will work on embedding our new Vision, Values and Aims and will continue to develop our curriculum through a clear, well-planned process of self-evaluation, considering the views of all members of the community.
- We will continue to improve our BGE planning documents to ensure they are useful in supporting planning, assessment, and moderation.
- We will embed the **KHS Learning Standard** across all curricular areas to improve the quality and consistency of learning experiences, ensuring teaching is well-prepared, inclusive, and inspiring, with effective questioning and feedback that supports learner progress.
- We want to increase motivation and enjoyment by planning project-based learning experiences for learners in S1/2.
- We are planning a curriculum with an additional level of support for the successful transition of S1 learners working at early/first level.
- We will develop a strategy paper for the successful launch and use of a profiling tool with learners.
- We want all learners to experience improved engagement and motivation in learning through creative approaches to delivering learning and teaching using a wide range of digital tools.
- We want to offer more qualification bundles aligned with local labour market intelligence and our learners' aspirations.
- We want to continue to place an emphasis on improving understanding and use of the SCQF amongst our stakeholders to maximise the attainment of young people through offering appropriate SCQF awards.



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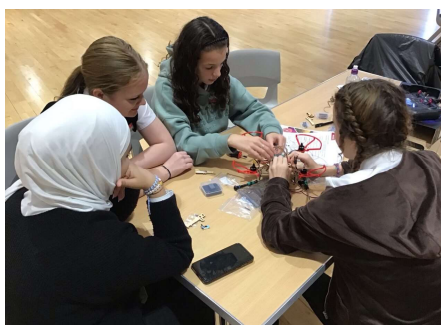
Silver Duke of Edinburgh Expedition

S1 Jungle Quest – PBL Oct 2025



Mentors in Violence Protection

DYW Ambassadors



Quadcopter Challenge



Skills Framework

At Kirkcaldy High School, our vision is to support every young person to develop their talents and strive to meet their potential—academically, emotionally, and socially—through high expectations, supportive relationships, and shared success.

Founded in **respect**, inspired by **ambition**, and united in **community**, we live our motto: Usque Conabor — **'I will strive to the utmost.'**

Dream big. Work hard. Be kind.

Self Management



Focusing

I can set goals and targets for myself and work towards them.



Integrity

I can stand up for what I believe in a respectful manner.



Adapting

I can receive and respond to feedback in a positive way.



Initiative

I can take responsibility for my learning and break larger goals into smaller ones.

Social Intelligence



Communicating

I can communicate with others in different ways - such as written, verbal and digitally.



Feeling

I can understand how others might be feeling in different circumstances and show kindness.



Collaborating

I can work well in a group and listen to other people's opinions respectfully.



Leading

I can take the lead in a group situation making sure everyone has clear purpose.

Innovation



Curiosity

I have a positive attitude when learning a new topic or skill.



Creativity

I can think creatively about solutions to problems.



Sense-Making

I can ask, research, and answer questions about the world and identify patterns.



Critical Thinking

I can come to a reasoned judgement for a problem or challenge.

Appendix B – KHS Curriculum Overview 2025-26

												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION (BGE) S1-3																																												
S1	English and Literacy (4)				Modern Languages (4) All young people to experience both French and Spanish				Mathematics and Numeracy (4)				Science (3) Biology, Chemistry and Physics taught through rotations			Social Subjects (4) Geography, History, Modern Studies and Rights taught through rotations				Expressive Arts (3) Comprised of Art, Drama and Music (1 period each)			Technologies (3) Comprised of DET (1), Digital (1) and Business Tech (1)		Skills and Enrichment (2) Comprised of Literacy (1) and Numeracy (1)		HWB (5) Comprised of PE (3), HE (1) and PSE (1)																	
	English and Literacy (4)				Modern Languages (3) All young people to experience both French and Spanish		Mathematics and Numeracy (4)				Science (3) Biology, Chemistry and Physics taught through rotations			Social Subjects (3) Geography, History and Modern Studies taught through rotations		Expressive Arts (4) Comprised of Art (1), Drama (1) and Music (2)			Technologies (4) Comprised of DET (1), Digital (1) and Business Tech (2)			Skills and Enrichment (2) Comprised of Citizenship (1) and Classics (1)		HWB (5) Comprised of PE (3), HE (1) and PSE (1)																				
	English and Literacy (4)				Mathematics and Numeracy (4)				Personalisation, Choice and Depth (5 subjects x 4 periods) Continuation of BGE and all Curriculum areas																									Short Course (1)	HWB (3) Comprised of PE (2) and PSE (1)									
	English and Literacy (4)				Mathematics and Numeracy (4)				Personalisation, Choice and Depth (5 subjects x 4 periods) Continuation from S3 subjects																									Study Support (1)	HWB (3) Comprised of PE (2) and PSE (1)									
	English and Literacy (6) All young people to complete English Qualification or equivalent at level 5 or better				Mathematics and Numeracy (6) All young people must achieve level 5 numeracy by end of S4 if not choosing Maths Qualification or equivalent				Personalisation and choice 3 subjects from S4 courses studied 3 subjects x 6 periods = 18 periods: Opportunities to study Foundation Apprenticeships, College course, work experience etc.																									Personalisation & Choice (RME/PE/Study Support/Wellbeing/Employability) (2)			HWB: PSE (1)							
Personalisation and choice 4/5 subjects x 6 periods = 24 / 30 periods: Opportunities to study Foundation Apprenticeships, College course, work experience etc.																																												
SENIOR PHASE (SP) S4-6																																												
S4		English and Literacy (4)				Mathematics and Numeracy (4)				Personalisation, Choice and Depth (5 subjects x 4 periods) Continuation from S3 subjects																									Study Support (1)	HWB (3) Comprised of PE (2) and PSE (1)								
S5		English and Literacy (6) All young people to complete English Qualification or equivalent at level 5 or better						Mathematics and Numeracy (6) All young people must achieve level 5 numeracy by end of S4 if not choosing Maths Qualification or equivalent				Personalisation and choice 3 subjects from S4 courses studied 3 subjects x 6 periods = 18 periods: Opportunities to study Foundation Apprenticeships, College course, work experience etc.																									Personalisation & Choice (RME/PE/Study Support/Wellbeing/Employability) (2)			HWB: PSE (1)				
Personalisation and choice 4/5 subjects x 6 periods = 24 / 30 periods: Opportunities to study Foundation Apprenticeships, College course, work experience etc.																																												
S6		Personalisation and choice 4/5 subjects x 6 periods = 24 / 30 periods: Opportunities to study Foundation Apprenticeships, College course, work experience etc.																																										

