



MERCHANT TAYLORS'
School

The Fourth Form Curriculum

Guidance and Course Details

2023 / 2024

We are a community forged from innovation, courage, 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 courageous 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 am looking forward to welcoming you and your sons to Merchant Taylors' School on Tuesday 25th April. The evening serves two key purposes: to provide guidance about some of the academic choices available and to begin the process of integrating your boys into the School as they meet their Heads of House and their peers.

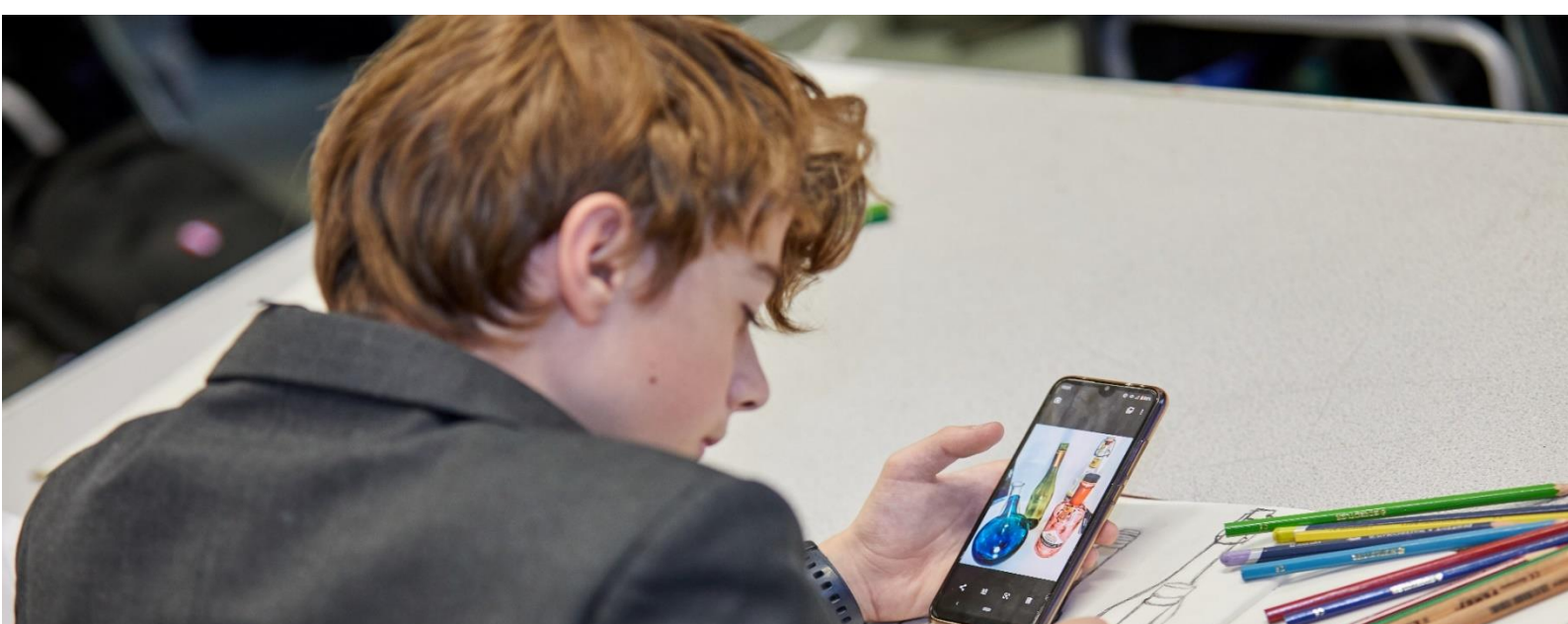
The start of the Fourth Form at Merchant Taylors' is an exciting time both for boys new to the School and those who have been with us since Third Form. All the boys feel they are making a big step up and have the chance to show us all what they can do. The School has magnificent grounds, world-class 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 Head Master with a strong vision for academic excellence and holistic wellbeing. Having started here myself in 2022, after many years teaching in Sydney, I can vouch for the dynamic and exciting life of this place. It has been a pleasure to get to know everyone here, not least the boys of course, who make Merchant Taylors' School what it is and give it its distinctive character.

We hope that the choices available are made clear by the welcome from Mr Garvey, as well as this booklet. 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 worth underlining all the many co-curricular opportunities that exist: we really encourage all the boys to get stuck into Music, Games, Design and Technology, Art and much more besides, even if they have chosen other academic options. The boys who are busy and fully engaged in the life of the School are always the ones who thrive and enjoy their time here the most.

For parents whose sons join us in September, there will be a further celebratory, social opportunity to meet your son's tutor and Head of House towards the end of the summer term, and an exciting chance for all boys and their families to take part in a (completely optional) watersports day. A comprehensive welcome booklet and further details of these events, as well as the induction day in September, will be sent to you in due course.

We look forward to welcoming you all into the Merchant Taylors' community.

Dr Rollo Hesketh
Head of Lower School
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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 whole range 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:

Compulsory Subjects	Optional Subjects
English	French
Maths	German
Biology	Spanish
Chemistry	Latin & Greek
Physics	Latin
Computer Science	Classical Civilisation
Geography	Music
History	Drama
Religious Studies	Sports Science
Art & Design	
Design & Technology	
Physical Education	
PSHE	

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 late 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 use.

Rob 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.

R P Bailey
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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 thirty 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 pupils – around sixty each year choose to continue their study of Latin (in addition to about thirty pupils studying the joint Greek and Latin course).

The first half term will be spent revising thoroughly the fundamentals of the language, to ensure that all pupils have a secure grasp of the basics, and by the end of the year pupils will have covered almost all of the grammar required for the GCSE. The main resource is Taylor's *Latin to GCSE Part 2*.

All pupils studying Latin will also study extracts of Latin literature in the original and in translation, and in doing so will cover aspects of Roman history and Classical mythology. 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.

Philip Harrison
Head of Classics
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Classical Civilisation

The Classical Civilisation course will provide an overview of the fascinating worlds of Greece and Rome, and unlike the Latin and Gratin courses contains no study of language. This is an ideal course for pupils who have not studied Latin before, but would like to learn about the Greeks and Romans, or for those who have enjoyed the historical elements of a Latin course, but have not flourished on the linguistic side. Alternatively, this course is a good complement for the Gratin or Latin courses, for aspiring Classicists who want to study not only the Greek and Latin languages, but also the rich and varied cultures that used them.

Pupils have probably encountered the Classical world earlier in their school careers, in the form of Greek myths, and tales of Sparta and Roman emperors. In this course, we shall explore these further, and lots of things besides. We shall look at the Greek age of heroes and what we know of this, using Homer's epics along with the archaeological discoveries at Mycenae. We shall consider who the 300 were and why they chose to die heroically. We shall learn how Rome became such a power, and why Julius Caesar should never be called a Roman emperor.

Lessons will involve plenty of vigorous discussion, and by the end of the course, pupils will have gained a broad and healthy understanding of 1500 years of Greek and Roman history. They will also have learned how to approach an ancient source – whether a written extract in translation, or some archaeological remains, or some Classical art – and they will have looked at a range of literature, such as epic, tragedy, and comedy.

Philip Harrison
Head of Classics
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Music

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

The content of the curriculum is designed to develop the skills needed to study Music for public examinations to levels beyond the requirements of the exam specifications, and cover aspects of performing, composing, and listening and appraising. Pupils will explore a range of styles and genres, including popular music styles and classical music.

Many 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 course, we aim to enable all pupils who do not take instrumental lessons to learn to sing and play simple melodies, and harmonies, 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 musical structures, compositional devices and instrumental and vocal timbres. All pupils 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, whether they take their academic study of the subject further or not; 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).

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

At Merchant Taylors' everyone who learns an instrument or sings 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 huge 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 22 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.

Simon Couldridge
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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 *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. Alongside the practical elements of the course, pupils are introduced to drama theory as preparation for the GCSE course. Boys considering taking GCSE Drama should opt for Drama in the Fourth Form.

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

Cheryl Clarke
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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 modern 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, very many boys take more than one language.

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

Sadly not. 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.

Can I take a subject for GCSE which I don't study in the Fourth Form?

Not normally. There may be a chance to take up a second modern foreign language *ab initio* at GCSE if you are a talented linguist. Pupils can also take Sport Science GCSE without taking it in the Fourth Form, since they will also be studying PE and taking Games.

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 timetabling constraints mean we are not able to guarantee it, so every year we have to also allocate some boys to their back-up choice.

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.



