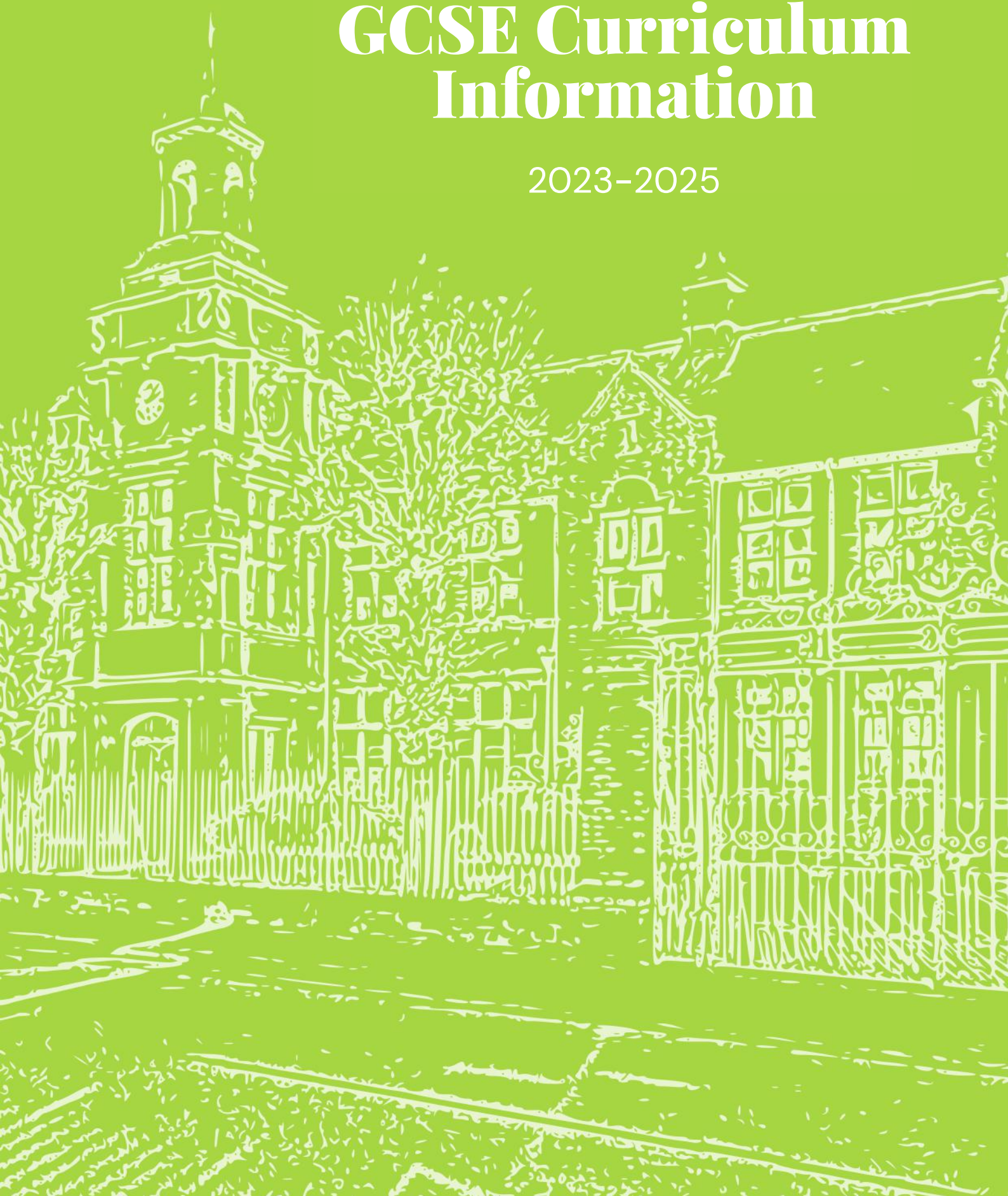




Brentwood School

# GCSE Curriculum Information

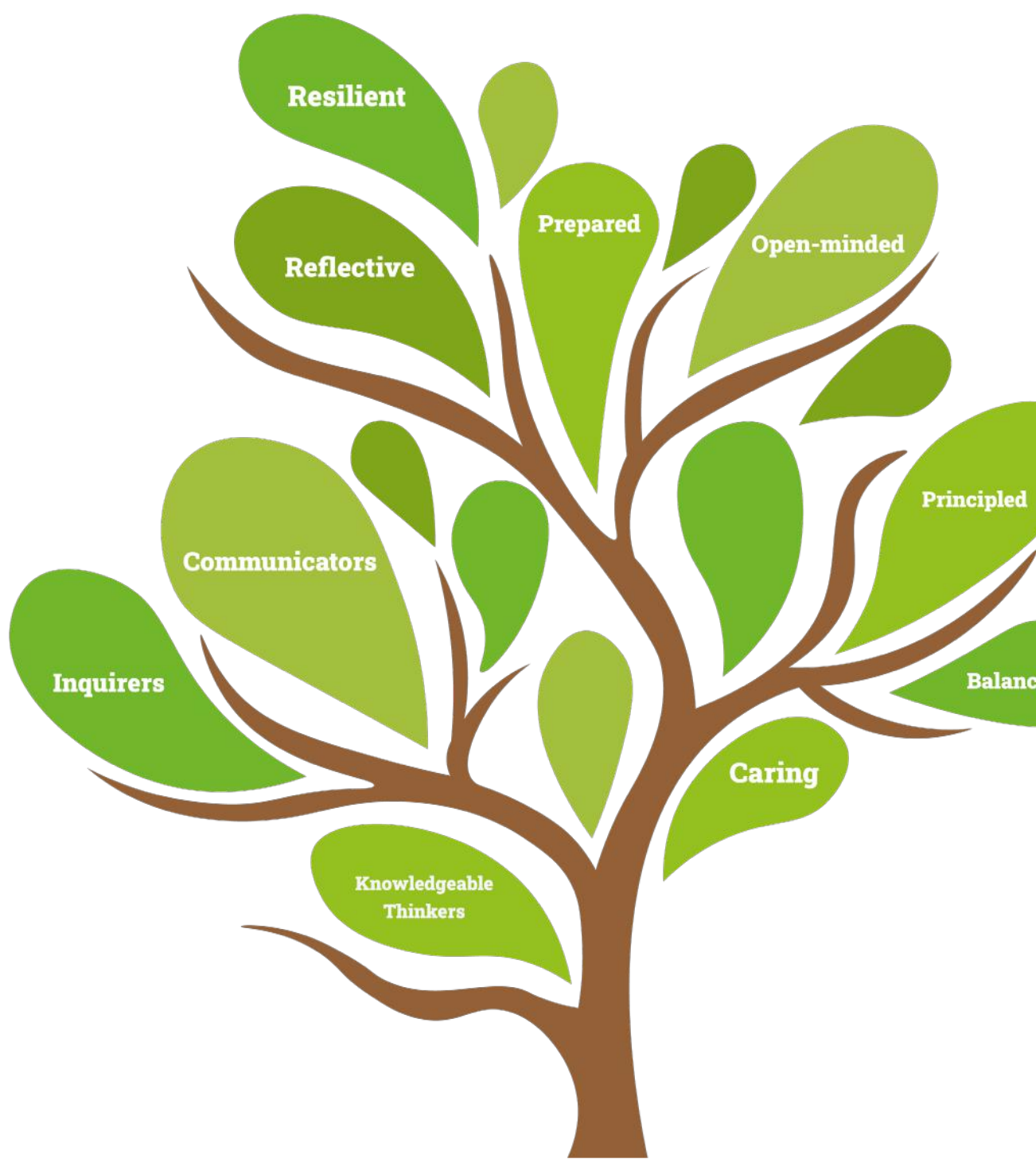
2023–2025



# Introduction

Years 10 & 11 are a really exciting time: a time in which our students are engaged, challenged and inspired. Through their GCSE courses, students face increasing academic demands and real opportunity to begin honing in on their interests. Over these two years, our students mature rapidly from the schoolboys and schoolgirls of the Lower School to our next School leaders in the Sixth Form.

Brentwood School endeavours to develop young people who display all of the attributes in our learner profile, you can see these below.



# Core Curriculum

(taken by all students)

- Mathematics GCSE
- English Language and English Literature: two separate GCSEs
- Human Universe: an interdisciplinary course in Year 10 intended to expand students intellectual horizons
- Higher Project Qualification, HPQ: a research project in Year 11, which helps develop students research and self-management skills
- Core Physical Education and Games: non-GCSE

## Science Pathways

All students continue studying Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Students either complete the Science IGCSE Double Award, meaning students are awarded two IGCSE grades for their combined study of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, or students can opt for “three Science IGCSEs” in the “Free choice” option block, meaning they are then awarded three IGCSE grades, one for each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Each Science subject, whether part of the Double Award or “three Science IGCSEs”, is taught by dedicated specialists.

We recommend that students who are interested in Sciences or Engineering in Sixth Form or as a career opt for “three Science IGCSEs”. However, our Sixth Form subject entry requirements do permit students to study Sciences in Sixth Form after studying Science IGCSE Double Award.

# Option Subjects



All students must choose one option from the Humanities block and one option from the Modern Foreign Languages block.

## Humanities

*(chosen one subject from this block)*

Geography

History

Religious Studies

Latin

## Modern Foreign Language

*(chosen one subject from this block)*

Chinese

French

German

Italian

Spanish

English as an Additional Language

Very occasionally, students are given permission to opt out of a modern foreign language. This permission needs to be explicitly given by the Deputy Head (Academic) and is dependent upon support from the Learning Support departments.

For further details concerning the individual courses, please refer to the subject specific information set out within this booklet. As an independent school, we have greater flexibility in the qualifications we offer than schools in the state sector. Our academic Heads of Department each choose whether to offer a GCSE or an IGCSE course, and a particular specification, based on their judgement about the content and the balance of valuable skills the syllabus helps foster.



Students then choose an additional three options drawn from the third “Free choice” block.

This provides considerable flexibility with students being able to select combinations that include three Creative and Technical subjects, or alternatively three Humanities, or up to three Modern Foreign Languages.

### “Free Choice”

*(chosen three subject from this block)*

Three separate Science IGCSEs  
*(rather than two IGCSEs of Combined Science Double Award)*

Art

Academic PE

Chinese

Classical Civilisation\*

Computer Science

Dance\*

Design Technology

Drama

Food and Nutrition

French

Geography

German

Greek\*

History

Italian

Latin

Music

Religious Studies

Spanish

Supervised private study in the Library (thereby taking one fewer GCSE overall)

\* Students can choose a maximum of one asterisked subject; these subjects will be taught in co-educational classes.

Most students study 10 GCSEs, however there is an option to opt for 9 GCSEs and have supervised private study in the Library instead of a tenth GCSE.

# Making Informed Subject Choices

Since the majority of GCSE courses are designed and structured to be taken throughout the course of Years 10 and 11 of secondary education, it is necessary for students to make their subject choices during Year 9. For some students, the process of making subject choices will be refreshingly straightforward and will be guided and informed by academic aptitude, intrinsic interest and/or career aspirations. However, for other students, the process may be slightly more complicated or problematic. We want all students to make informed choices so that they benefit from a curriculum which is academically challenging and hugely enjoyable.

We believe that all young people should study at least one modern foreign language at GCSE level. As an IB World School, we are committed to our students developing an active engagement with the world. Indeed, in the global village of the twenty-first century, language skills are essential. Young people should aspire to be culturally and politically literate and studying a humanities subject enables them to develop their skills of communication, analysis and evaluation.

Our insistence on some GCSE subjects being compulsory; having some subjects where there is a restricted choice, plus some completely free choice, means students can construct a personalised curriculum path, while being confident that they are retaining an effective balance of subjects, valued in Sixth Form, by universities and employers.

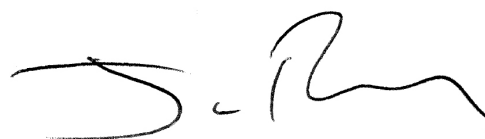
In order to enable us to structure the timetable option blocks, we will require you to indicate on an online form which subjects your son/daughter would ideally like to study for GCSE, in addition to the core subjects. Timetable option blocks are determined that seek to ensure that as many students as possible are able to study the combination of subjects that they have indicated. Therefore, a late form could mean that a student's preferences are not taken into account.

After a student has returned their options form, they are able to change their minds about which subjects to study, providing (i) their new combination of subjects fits the timetable option blocks that will have been drawn up and includes one modern foreign language and one humanity, and not more than one 'asterisk' subject; and (ii) class sizes permit.

It is important for students to consult with parents and teaching staff when making subject choices. They may also choose to discuss subject choices with their Form Tutor or Head of Year. Additionally, Mrs O'Connell (Head of Careers) is available to provide career guidance to students and their parents. Mr Sellers (Director of Sixth Form) can discuss choice of subjects and how it may impact upon specific university courses. It is also worth noting that elite universities will expect students to achieve 7-9 grades in the majority of their subjects.

Even at this stage, students should consider which subjects they may wish to study in Sixth Form. As much as possible, students should aim to keep their options open and choose courses which provide them with the freedom and flexibility to pursue Sixth Form subjects that support their future aspirations.

Please do contact me if you have any general queries about combinations of GCSE subjects. Making these choices can seem a little daunting and we will do everything we can to guide and support you through this process. We hope that it is an exciting step, and one which will enable our students to flourish in the next stage of their education.



**Jonathan Barfield Moore**  
*Deputy Head (Academic)*



# Subject Information

*click on the  
subject for link  
to individual  
subject pages*

[Art](#)

[Academic PE](#)

[Biology](#)

[Chemistry](#)

[Chinese](#)

[Classical Civilisation](#)

[Combined Science](#)

[Computer Science](#)

[Dance](#)

[Design & Technology](#)

[Drama](#)

[EAL](#)

[English Language](#)

[English Literature](#)

[Food Preparation & Nutrition](#)

[French](#)

[Geography](#)

[German](#)

[Greek](#)

[History](#)

[HPQ](#)

[Italian](#)

[Latin](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Music](#)

[Physics](#)

[Theology & Philosophy  
\(Religious Studies\)](#)

[Spanish](#)



**VLM**

*Virtue Learning Manners*