inspired

Curriculum Policy (Academy21)

2024-2025

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King's InterHigh
LEADING ONLINE SCHOOL

Academy 21
The Online Alternative Provision Experts

Contents

Context

Academy21 (A21) is proud to be the UK's leading provider of live, online, alternative provision (AP). Each year we work with hundreds of schools and thousands of learners across a wide range of local authority areas. We support vulnerable learners from years 7 to 11 by offering students with behavioural, medical and/or mental health needs, a pathway to achieve strong recognised outcomes.

Vision and principles

We aspire to enable every vulnerable young person in our care to access an education, which is fully aligned with their needs and supports their successful transition back to a mainstream setting or on to a new educational or employment setting. Our core principles are flexibility; inclusivity and engagement.

Flexibility references a timetable and educational programme customised completely to students' needs.

Inclusivity defines our ethos that every student is welcome at A21, and the team will endeavour to ensure that each individual reaches their potential.

Engagement is the key to all online classroom activity, where resources are adapted to motivate, inspire, and foster a renewed enthusiasm for learning.

Curriculum aims

Quality & balance

Delivering an appropriate and challenging education that enables students to develop the skills and knowledge they require is central to our aims. Our curriculum offer made to schools and mentors offers sufficient breadth and the opportunity to achieve success in Key Stage 4 qualifications so that vulnerable students can move forward with confidence to explore choices regarding post-16 education or employment.

Inclusive & flexible

We provide a range of learning opportunities which are inclusive because they are tailored to the needs of young people and fit with the requirements of their physical schools. As an online AP for vulnerable students, we work with mentors to tailor each student's timetable to their individual needs in terms of timings and subjects selected. We recognise that mentors selecting an online AP at A21 for their students do so for a range of reasons - we offer full flexibility to mentors in terms of the academic curriculum options they adopt at each key stage.

Supporting wellbeing

We support students to develop confidence in their learning through an effective learning environment and offer a high level of encouragement, which enables them to develop skills and the resilience needed to thrive. The curriculum is successfully adapted, designed, and developed to be aligned with the appropriate National Curriculum content and to meet the additional needs, which many of our students present. It is underpinned by an inclusive and supportive ethos, which promotes personalised learning to facilitate the improvement of confidence and re-engagement with educational goals. Our curriculum is delivered in a safe, online environment where students can practice navigation of the digital social world to develop confidence and a renewed interest in academic subjects.

Enabling transition

At A21, we aim to offer students the opportunity to learn within an environment which allows them to pursue a clear pathway and work towards recognised qualifications, to progress on to further education. We seek to focus on what students in the AP setting can do as well as what they know by developing core thinking and literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is designed to aid them in making connections in their learning in preparation for reintegration into mainstream settings or post-16 environments.

Curriculum overview

A21 offers courses at Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4). However, we can augment students' programmes of study where appropriate by placing them with our sister school, King's InterHigh (KIH) for Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 5 (KS5).

KIH's KS2 curriculum offers children a rich and engaging experience of the learning platform. A full curriculum is on offer, comprising a core package of 7 subjects, taught by class teachers and subject specialists, with the flexibility of offer built in for families. A full subject list can be found here: https://kingsinterhigh.co.uk/primary-school-online/

At KS3, we provide a balanced curriculum offer for Years 7, 8, and 9 with a range of courses in essential subjects. Available at two levels, our 'Skillbuilder' programmes provide students with the knowledge and understanding they'll need for future study. Students who complete our Skillbuilder 1 course are ready to follow Skillbuilder 2, which ensures students will be ready to study for their GCSEs at the end of the programme.

Alongside maths, English, and science, pupils can study PSHE, digital skills, and humanities and citizenship.

Our KS4 curriculum supports students through their GCSE years as they work to achieve exam goals and prepare for future education or careers.

The A21 curriculum is inclusive and pays particular regard to protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

KS4 - Course List

	Subject	Specification	Duration	Level
GCSE	Maths	AQA 8300 Edexcel 1MA1 WJEC Maths & Numeracy (Foundation Tier)	1 or 2 years Year 11 only	9-1 D-G
	English Language	AQA 8700 WJEC 3700	1 or 2 years Year 11 only	9-1 A-G
	English Literature	AQA 8702	1 or 2 years	9-1
	Combined Science (Trilogy)	AQA 8464	2 years or Year 11 only	9-1
	Triple Science	Biology AQA 8461 Chemistry AQA 8462 Physics AQA 8463	Year 11 only	9-5
	Science	WJEC 3430	Year 11 only	A-G
	History	AQA 8145 WJEC 3100	1 or 2 years Year 11 only	9-1 A-G
	Geography	AQA 8145	1 year	
	Citizenship Studies	AQA 8100	1 year	9-1
Cambridge Nationals	ICT	OCR J836	1 or 2 years	Level 1 & Level 2
Entry level	Science	WJEC 6430QC	1 year	EL
Functional Skills	Mathematics	Edexcel Level 1	Weeks	Level 1
	English	Edexcel Level 1	Weeks	Level 1
	English	Edexcel Level 2	Weeks	Level 2
	Digital Skills (ICT)	Edexcel Level 1	Weeks	Level 1
	Digital Skills (ICT)	Edexcel Level 2	Weeks	Level 2
Rescue Year 11 GCSE	Maths	AQA 8300 Edexcel 1MA1	Weeks	9-1
	English Language	AQA 8700	Weeks	9-1
Non-accredited	PSHE	National	1 year	N/A

KIH's KS5 curriculum enables students to choose from two equally high-quality, internationally recognised curriculums to study online. Students can study AS and A Levels or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. To do the IBDP students must follow the 'Diploma' route of 6 subjects plus the DP core. A Levels offer further flexibility, with our core package of 3 A levels being typical but students can study 1 to 5 subjects at AS or A Level. The subject options for both qualifications can be found here: https://kingsinterhigh.co.uk/sixth-form-online/

Additional curriculum options

In addition to the academic curriculum outlined above, students at A21 have access to additional courses and provision, which enhance strategies endorsed for well-being, customised learning, and innovative teaching.

We offer well-being workshops in 6 weekly blocks and study-skills courses in 12 weekly blocks. Moreover, all students can access 1:1 support for each subject once per half term.

A21 is engaging with an exciting platform, 'Inspired AI', which makes use of AI to tailor 'nuggets' (micro lessons) to individual students' precise academic levels as they work through topics and take mini assessments. This platform is highly engaging and hugely successful in improving students' independent learning skills and outcomes in a personalised and sustained fashion.

We run an 'Active Time' session every week for all students, an opportunity for students to get physically active and try out different exercises that will help them develop understanding about the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle. The current offer includes exercise, yoga and fitness. The course is optional and available to all students.

Students have access to career guidance via their mentor or their registered school. However, at A21, we also provide students with information, advice and guidance via their teachers and the Unifrog platform, where students can access 'best-in-class' advice and resources to help them plan their next steps. Also, where appropriate, they can access the comprehensive pathways programme at KIH.

In addition, we provide all students with pastoral opportunities and guidance through resources on the student portal, as well as teacher input on key themes that reflect our values and their development needs. These themes include topics such as inclusivity, participation; online safety and 'active time' sessions to promote physical wellness.

At A21, we offer relationships and sex education to schools requiring it for their students, primarily via our PSHE curriculum. The PSHE curriculum content is covered following the statutory guidance set out by the Department for Education in their 'Relationships and Sex Education' (RSE, Secondary) guidance Topics are developed from KS3 through to KS4 with a level of detail and content that is age appropriate.

In addition to this, advice relating to these topics is included in the student and mentor hubs and presentations by teachers to all students: this covers topics such as the need for inclusivity and positive relationships. Topics around sex and relationship education may also be touched upon in other subjects, for example via English texts and biology in science, as appropriate.

Systems and structure of the school day

The A21 day mirrors a typical school day in many ways so that students remain familiar with an educational routine. Lessons are between 9 am and 4 pm: students have the same subject at the same time with the same teacher each day from Monday to Thursday. This provides consistency and enables students to get to know their subject teachers well. Additionally, a homework/independent learning activity follows each lesson from Monday to Thursday. Fridays are a little different: students can opt to study PSHE and/or enrol on 'consolidation' courses where topics from the week are reviewed and customised support is given.

All mentors and students have access to user-friendly portals. This is where students access lessons, independent learning activities and view their reports. Similarly, mentors can hover over each of their student's 'pages' and view attendance and academic data, as well as half-termly and termly reports. The 'lesson content' section on the student and mentor portals is crucial as all teaching resources are accessible here. Students can watch a recording of a lesson they've missed or review its content on a pdf. Additionally, they can take part in a range of interactive online quizzes to deepen their subject knowledge via engaging and motivating activities.

Teachers give an EUI (effort, understanding, interaction) score out of 5 for every student in every lesson. These are viewed by mentors in a graphical format to oversee individual progress and engagement.

Learning model

From long-term medical conditions to permanent exclusions to challenges reintegrating at school, there are various reasons why vulnerable students may need a short or longer-term solution at A21. The A21 learning model is tailored to offer a robust, inclusive, and well-rounded education for students in need of a flexible solution.

A21 has courses designed to run over one year for KS3 pupils and one to two years for KS4 pupils. These programmes include a balanced range of subjects, preparing students for further study, GCSEs, or Functional Skills qualifications. With a comprehensive and stable learning environment, we support students to make strong academic progress for as long as they're with us.

We use an online learning platform and lesson library for delivery and 24/7 access to subject materials. Classes are timetabled and lessons are taught live by qualified UK teachers trained in online teaching and learning. All lessons are recorded. Students apply the knowledge they have learned through 'apply' or homework assignments and are assessed regularly through summative and formative assessments. Teachers use online breakout rooms for independent work during lessons and customised support, chats, polls, and quizzes to encourage student interaction and foster engagement and understanding of the topic being discussed.

Each course provides access to the entire subject curriculum; this is available to access at anytime from anywhere. All lessons are digitally recorded and once a lesson has been delivered, students can review the lesson recording. Subject materials in the 'Lesson Content' section of the portal can help students track down exactly what they need: this section acts as a superb feature to review content before tackling independent learning activities and embarking on exam revision.

Monitoring the implementation of the curriculum

The effectiveness of how the curriculum is implemented, together with its overall impact on student outcomes, is continuously monitored in a variety of ways:

➢ Learning walks conducted by senior leaders and heads of subject

➢ Formal lesson observations

➢ QAs/QRs (quality audits/reviews) conducted by schools whereby mentors watch sample lesson recordings and provide feedback

➢ Standardisation and moderation activity conducted by teams

➢ Mentor and student voice surveys

➢ Discussions with students in 1:1 tutorials

➢ Senior Education Team (SET) meetings and line management meetings between members of SET

➢ Outcomes/data analysis on key metrics relating to achievement, attendance, retention, and student engagement

➢ School evaluation meetings, where evidence on curriculum intent, implementation and impact are discussed

➢ Staff professional development programme

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

➢ Assessment Policy

➢ SEND policy and information report

➢ Equality policy

➢ Behaviour Policy

➢ Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

➢ E-Safety Policy