ACADEMY
GREAT BARR

Curriculum Policy

2026-27



Policy owner	Mr J Gurung
Approval	Local Governing Body
Effective from	November 2026
Next review	November 2027

1. Purpose and scope

This policy explains the curriculum at Q3 Academy Great Barr. It applies to students in Years 7 to 13.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares students for further study and adult life.

'Parent' includes carers and anyone with parental responsibility.

2. Curriculum design

Students are entitled to powerful knowledge that helps them participate in *life to the full*. The curriculum gives them experience of different disciplines and helps them discover their interests and strengths.

Detailed subject content, exam boards, and qualification titles are available on our curriculum portal.

A planned careers programme runs from Years 7 to 13. Further information is in the 'CEIAG Policy'.

3. Key stage 3 curriculum

Students in Years 7 to 9 study:

- art
- computing
- design and technology
- drama
- English
- food preparation and nutrition
- French
- geography
- history
- mathematics
- music
- religious studies
- science
- wellbeing active, which includes physical education
- wellbeing inspire, which includes personal, social, health, and economic education (PSHE) and relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE)

This broad programme gives students a secure foundation before they make Key Stage 4 choices.

4. Key stage 4 curriculum and options

Students in Years 10 and 11 work towards GCSE and vocational qualifications.

All students study:

- English language
- English literature
- mathematics
- science, normally combined science, with separate sciences available through the current Key Stage 4 options offer
- wellbeing active, including core physical education
- PSHE, RSHE, and core religious education (RE) through tutor time, assemblies, and dropdown days

Each student chooses geography or history and 3 further subjects from the current Key Stage 4 options offer.

The current Pathways booklet gives information about available courses and entry requirements.

Courses may change between cycles because of staffing, class size, student demand, qualification reform, or timetabling. The options information for the current cycle sets out the offer for that cohort.

5. Sixth form curriculum

GB6th offers A-level and vocational study in Years 12 and 13. Students choose 3 main subjects from the current offer.

The school provides PSHE, RSHE, and core religious education (RE) for sixth form students through tutor time, assemblies, and dropdown days.

To enter GB6th, students need at least grade 4 in both English and mathematics.

All sixth form subjects have entry requirements. The prospectus on the school's GB6th page lists current courses, entry requirements, and programme information.

6. Course choices and allocation

Students will receive information and guidance before choosing Key Stage 4 or sixth form courses. Parents can discuss choices with the school.

Most Key Stage 4 courses have no entry requirement. A small number of courses, such as GCSE physical education and music, have minimum requirements because of their particular demands. Some of these courses have an accessible alternative. Details are in the current Pathways booklet.

The school will try to give each student their first choices. A first choice is not guaranteed. Timetabling, staffing, class sizes, and student demand may require the school to:

- allocate a reserve choice
- limit places on a course
- withdraw a course before it begins

Where a course has more applicants than places, the school will use a random number generator to allocate first-choice places among eligible students. If a student misses a first choice in one block, the school will, where practical, prioritise their choices in other blocks.

The school makes the final course allocation. It will apply published requirements fairly and consider reasonable adjustments where required.

Changes to option subjects may be requested within the first 3 weeks of the course. The school will consider requests based on entry requirements, timetable availability, and class sizes. Requests made after this period will not normally be considered.

7. Grouping students

There are 2 parallel and equivalent timetable bands in each year, called 'g' and 'b'.

The normal grouping arrangements are:

- at Key Stage 3, students learn in mixed-attainment tutor groups for most subjects
- each Key Stage 3 year has one small nurture group for students who need additional support
- mathematics, science, computing, and wellbeing active use attainment sets at Key Stage 3
- English, mathematics, and science use attainment sets at Key Stage 4
- other Key Stage 4 subjects use mixed-attainment classes
- sixth form classes are mixed attainment

The school decides groups using current assessment information, identified needs, timetable requirements, and students' best interests. The school reviews set placements regularly based on students' current performance.

Parents and students can discuss a placement with the school. They cannot choose a particular class or set. The school makes the final placement decision.

8. Assessment and entry tiers

Current assessment evidence informs grouping, course advice, and qualification entry.

Mathematics, science, and French qualifications may offer foundation and higher tiers. The school will use current assessment evidence and the qualification rules when selecting a tier.

The school will select the tier it judges gives the student the best opportunity to show their knowledge and achieve the strongest available result.

Students and parents may discuss a tier decision with the school. The school makes the final decision as the examination centre. It will arrange approved access arrangements and reasonable adjustments where the relevant requirements are met.

9. Inclusion and access

Treating students fairly does not always mean providing identical teaching or arrangements.

Curriculum, pathway, and grouping decisions take account of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), safeguarding, medical needs, and other individual circumstances. Reasonable adjustments apply for disabled students, and decisions will not discriminate unlawfully.

Students with special educational needs receive support through the graduated approach and provision specified in any education, health and care plan.

Qualification assessment adjustments are subject to the awarding organisation's rules and the standards being assessed.

Further information is in the school's 'Disability Statement and Accessibility Plan' and 'SEND Local Offer Information Report and Intervention Guide'.

10. Withdrawal from RE and sex education

RE

A parent may withdraw a student under 18 from all or part of RE. A student aged 18 or over may make this decision themselves.

The request should be made in writing to the headteacher. The withdrawal form is in the school's 'PSHE and RSE Policy'. Students withdrawn from RE remain supervised.

Withdrawal from RE does not create a right to withdraw from another subject because it includes material about religion or belief.

Sex education within RSHE

A parent may request withdrawal from some or all sex education taught as part of RSHE. There is no right to withdraw from relationships education, health education, or related content taught through science.

The request should be made in writing to the headteacher using the form in the 'PSHE and RSE Policy'. The headteacher may discuss the request with the parent and, where appropriate, the student.

The headteacher may refuse a request only in exceptional circumstances under current statutory guidance.

From 3 terms before a student turns 16, they may choose to opt back into sex education despite an earlier parental withdrawal.

The school will provide appropriate, purposeful education during any period of withdrawal.

11. Questions, complaints, and information

Students, parents, and members of the public can use the school contact page to ask about the curriculum. The school can refer questions about a subject to the relevant head of department.

Concerns should normally be raised with the school first. A formal complaint may be made under the Trust's 'Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy and Procedure'. The complaints process does not give a student or parent the right to choose a class, set, tier, or course allocation.