



RUGBY SCHOOL
JAPAN

CURRICULUM GUIDE

LOWER SCHOOL

YEARS 7-9

2024-25



INTRODUCTION

We believe that the Lower School (Years 7-9) is a crucial period for pupils establishing the personal and intellectual habits necessary for their success at Rugby School Japan and in the world beyond. Our focus in the Lower School is, therefore, threefold. We aim to engage our pupils in a broad and rigorous academic experience: offering intellectually challenging and demanding material in all of their subjects. We also aim to allow pupils the freedom and opportunity to find and develop their academic passions. Finally we begin the process of developing the characteristics necessary for our pupils to become empowered and autonomous: to make reflection a habit; to be thoughtful enquirers; to find resilience and versatility in the face of challenge and failure; to think globally and act locally and to be confident communicators and collaborators when stepping out into the intellectual unknown.

We call this set of characteristics our Rugby Learner Profile, and much of what we do with our curriculum in the Lower School is with the aim of embedding it into the way our pupils approach their education. In addition to their timetabled lessons, our pupils will be engaged in an extensive programme of cross-disciplinary enrichment taking them beyond the boundaries of the classroom environment. They will be challenged to develop individual and collaborative projects, often being faced with work for which they will have no obvious or immediate solution, and will be required to co-operate with their peers and invest in each other's success. Along the way they will encounter setbacks, and in doing so, with guidance and encouragement, begin to develop the qualities necessary to respond purposefully to challenges in the future.

THE PUPIL JOURNEY THROUGH LOWER SCHOOL

Our Lower School curriculum defines a pupil's journey through Years 7-9 at Rugby School Japan. The development of our academic curriculum has centred on three big questions:

What do we want our learners to look like?

What should our curriculum look like?

What should our teaching, assessment and reporting look like?

We are aiming to build an authentic partnership between our staff, pupils and families. As such, we have actively consulted (and will continue to do so) on these three questions with our wider RSJ community in order to help us develop the best learning outcomes for our pupils.

The Lower School curriculum has been created in recognition of the following points:

- The Rugby Learner Profile describes the characteristics we want our pupils to exhibit.
- Our curriculum must support character development and enable the acquisition of key skills that we believe are essential to being a successful school leaver.
- We are committed to being pupil-centric in our pedagogy.
- We take a broader view of what skills will enable our pupils to be future ready, rather than just academically successful at GCSE and A-level.
- We would like to see Year 7 as the start of an interesting and exciting three years, offering an innovative academic programme as well as considering what knowledge is truly essential for pupils to have before moving into the Middle School curriculum.
- We need to reflect on what it means to be a British school in an international setting in Japan and be mindful of the flexible entry points for pupils and the varied educational and cultural backgrounds they come from.
- We want our teachers to be free to teach topics about which they are passionate. We believe in allowing departments and teachers to choose the most appropriate approach to teaching and learning, including designing topics with dynamic content.
- Heads of Subject will continue to liaise closely in putting together the programme of study in each subject for Years 7-9 in order to minimise the overlap of work covered whilst, at the same time, providing solid foundations for study at GCSE and beyond.
- We believe that the curriculum should give pupils and their parents a much clearer idea of where the strengths and weaknesses of each child lie. We want to encourage a broader understanding of what assessment is for and how it can be done well, avoiding a dominance of traditional exams, and the pressures that go with them, when this does not need to be the case.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Over the course of the Lower School curriculum, pupils will study English, Japanese, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Art, Design & Technology, Drama, Music, PE, Digital Literacy, Finance and PSHE. All pupils study Japanese, where the pupil's experience (from native speaker to beginner level) can be catered for. They must also choose one Modern Foreign Language: French, German, or Mandarin Chinese. In addition, all pupils have a weekly tutor period and a weekly reading session in the library.

Personalised Learning lessons are an option available to support pupils with particular English language or other learning needs.



SKILLS MAP

The following table shows how the Rugby Learner Profile characteristics are intended to be developed through the acquisition of key skills for each pupil as they journey through the Lower School curriculum. Pupils will be able to track their own progress and use this as a basis for discussion with their tutor.

RESILIENT

I am becoming resilient by...

- Allowing others to help me succeed and helping others to succeed
- Celebrating others' successes
- Dealing appropriately with disappointment
- Delaying gratification
- Identifying my needs and advocating for myself
- Learning to take responsibility for my mistakes
- Participating in events or taking on a role that might push me beyond my comfort zone
- Seeking solutions when I am faced with challenges

VERSATILE

I am becoming versatile by...

- Adapting the way I speak for different purposes and audiences
- Altering the way I write for different audiences for different purposes, from articles to academic essays
- Applying skills and concepts that I have learned in one area to a different area
- Appreciating the benefits of both paper-based and digital learning
- Being willing to understand different cultures and valuing friendships irrespective of personal background
- Engaging in a variety of enrichment activities related to academia, music, arts and sport
- Having an open-minded approach to different study skills
- Knowing what I need to commit to long term memory, and how to do that, and having a variety of strategies to remember things
- Learning how to use the tools in the Google suite for different elements of my learning
- Managing my time, adapting to workload deadlines, and planning ahead so I can fulfil all my commitments
- Organising my work in a logical way
- Recognising when to take a leading role and when to follow and support others
- Skimming, scanning and close reading texts depending on my needs and knowing when it is appropriate to use each

GLOBALLY-MINDED

I am becoming globally-minded by...

- Celebrating global diversity in all its forms
- Critically evaluating information that is presented to me
- Engaging with media in a variety of languages
- Gaining knowledge and respecting my host nation's culture and language
- Knowing how AI can help me and how it can hinder me, and ensuring I use it responsibly
- Learning more about about a range of cultures through our lessons in language, geography and history
- Listening to the perspectives and opinions of other people
- Looking to the future and considering how the choices I make now will impact it, both personally and on a more global level
- Making fair and equitable decisions
- Realising and appreciating the differences between my own culture and that of others
- Seizing opportunities to practise empathy and understanding
- Taking an interest in what is happening locally and globally
- Using my knowledge and understanding of other cultures to read situations and interpret meaning

REFLECTIVE

I am becoming reflective by...

- Acknowledging what I can do differently in the future after experiencing disappointments and setbacks
- Adopting a healthy approach to the expectations I have of myself
- Appreciating why I learn and how it connects to my personal life and the world around me
- Considering my digital footprint and recognising that what I say online may have an impact on other people and on my future
- Maintaining balance in all aspects of my life, including how much screen time I have a day
- Recognising the strengths of myself and others and delegating for the best outcome when appropriate
- Setting myself achievable and aspirational goals that will challenge me
- Taking responsibility for my own actions and accepting the consequences with a positive mindset
- Thinking about how my words and actions can affect those around me

I am becoming enquiring by...

- Attending Scholars' Forums, workshops and lectures from visiting speakers
- Becoming increasingly independent with my learning beyond the classroom
- Being creative in the way I think about problems, pose hypotheses, and consider possible solutions and outcomes
- Developing a scientific curiosity
- Engaging with texts critically
- Enhancing my learning by using technology, when appropriate
- Establishing links between my learning and understanding that the skills and knowledge I develop in one area will support me in other areas
- Making inferences from the reading I undertake
- Reading laterally and using the internet for research safely and with academic integrity
- Reading for pleasure: a wide range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, in English, my home language, my heritage language and any other languages I am learning
- Taking inspiration from existing works to create something new
- Thinking critically by asking better questions and challenging the information that is presented to me
- Using my imagination to design, build and create new things

I am becoming communicative and collaborative by...

- Applying my note-taking skills to various purposes
- Articulating my opinion of the works I engage with in a clear and meaningful way
- Choosing appropriate media to communicate a message with my audience
- Correctly citing my work
- Disagreeing respectfully, when needed
- Encouraging peers to contribute to group discussions and group tasks
- Engaging appropriately in social situations, including actively contributing to discussion with staff and peers at tutor lunches
- Giving and receiving feedback to and from my peers, and recognising the value of this feedback and the process
- Knowing how to communicate with a range of different people, both verbally and in written form - from friends in social situations, to staff, to external stakeholders
- Practising non-verbal modes of communication
- Speaking to different audiences for different purposes
- Summarising, paraphrasing and quoting information, as appropriate
- Understanding the language of maths, music and science, and recognising that communication comes in different forms
- Working in teams and groups to contribute towards something meaningful
- Using the Google suite and other appropriate digital tools to work on group projects
- Writing for different audiences for different purposes



THE CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMME

Through a vibrant and extensive co-curricular programme that takes place after lessons each afternoon, pupils take on an individual portfolio beyond the classroom that encompasses variety and challenge. Every day has a theme - from visual and performing arts, academic enrichment, personal enrichment, team and performance, to leadership and competition - and pupils select from within the choices of activities available.





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