

Herschel Grammar School Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Curriculum Intent

Psychology ultimately is the study of mind and behaviour. In particular, how we respond to situations and how we can function effectively in the real world. This is achieved by ensuring all students understand the underlying principles of psychology. Students are encouraged to be curious about a range of factors that influence our behaviours, e.g. localisation of the brain; phobias; OCD and repressed memories. Students will be able to identify how psychological illnesses are developed, e.g. schizophrenia, and how this impacts an individual and how they can be treated. Students will be able to explore the reasons why individuals become complicit in horrific incidents in the 20th century such as the Holocaust, how such evil can be committed and to reflect on whether these causes are learned or imitated.

Students are encouraged to apply all the concepts they have learned to real-life situations to develop their analytical and critical thinking skills. All prominent psychologists are discussed with particular reference to their contribution to psychology and how this has affected our day-to-day lives. Students are encouraged to work independently and in groups when taking part in debates. Lessons are interactive and it is hoped that students are able to discuss their everyday behaviour using psychological concepts.

Throughout the course, students complete practice questions where regular feedback is given and students are then given the time to act on that feedback. Lessons encourage revisiting prior knowledge to ensure students are constantly engaging in higher order learning.

Curriculum Impact

Students leave Psychology with an open mind and a deeper understanding of the issues faced in today's society. They have a greater awareness of the key explanations of human behaviour, an understanding of ethical issues and can consider different positions within debates. Students become critical thinkers, they engage with academic literature which overall develops their cultural and academic capital in order to participate fully in society. Students are also given the opportunity to impact the curriculum by engaging in student feedback forms.

Students have gone on to study psychology at university along with related subjects. Examples include, Psychology and Neuroscience, Criminology, Forensic Psychology. This shows that studying psychology at A level has inspired them to study it further.

-  **Career guidance:** Psychology teaching can support **career exploration** by helping students identify values, interests, and skills aligned with green jobs.
- **Workplace psychology:** Understanding **organizational and occupational psychology** is useful in green careers, especially for improving sustainability practices in companies.
- **Sustainable work values:** Psychological insights help promote **ethical decision-making and a sustainability mindset**, which are crucial in the green economy.

Psychology equips learners with the **tools to understand and change human behavior**, which is at the core of environmental challenges and solutions. By integrating nature, climate issues, green

careers, and sustainability into psychology education, students develop both the **knowledge and the motivation** to contribute to a more sustainable world.

Through education, we have the privilege of engaging directly with children and young people who:

- are passionate about the natural world
- want to do their best to protect it
- can influence their wider communities

Throughout this document, whenever the following icon is used , it indicates that the teaching and learning is linked to one or more of the following:

- nature
- the causes and impacts of climate change
- careers in the green economy
- the importance of sustainability

Year group	12
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Rationale for sequencing	Student classes in Year 12 consist of students who have studied Psychology at KS4 and those that have not. In order to ensure all students are at a level playing field, the topic of approaches is taught in the first half term. This ensures that all students are aware of the basic assumptions that each school of psychology has in reference to human behaviour. Research methods are taught on a weekly basis throughout the year to enable students to relate key studies to the methods adopted. As we follow the A level linear course, topics identified just for Y13 study are covered during Y12 to ensure students have that wider understanding of the topic.
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Term 1	
Half term	Half term
Approaches in Psychology: • The Learning approach including classical and operant conditioning. • The cognitive approach including schemas. • The biological approach including genetics, biological structures and neurochemistry • The psychodynamic approach including the unconscious mind, structure of personality and defence mechanisms. • Humanistic psychology including freewill and self-actualisation. Research Methods	Social Influence • Types of conformity. • Explanations for conformity. • Factors affecting conformity as investigated by Asch. • Explanations for obedience. • Factors affecting obedience as investigated by Milgram. Explanations of resistance to social influence. • Minority influence. Research Methods
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
Attachment • Animal studies of attachment. • Explanations of attachment including Bowlby's monotropic theory. • Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation'.	Psychopathology Definitions of abnormality • Behavioural, emotional and cognitive characteristics of phobias, depression and OCD.

• Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation • The influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships Memory • The multi-store model of memory including coding, capacity and duration. • The working memory model. • Explanations for forgetting including proactive and retroactive interference. • Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony including leading questions and post-event discussion; anxiety.. The use of the cognitive interview	• Behavioural approach to explaining and treating phobias. • The cognitive approach to explaining and treating depression. • The biological approach to explaining and treating OCD  Learning about climate change includes understanding its psychological effects, such as eco-anxiety, trauma from natural disasters, or feelings of helplessness. • Research Methods
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
Biopsychology • The divisions of the nervous system. • The structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons. • The process of synaptic transmission. • The function of the endocrine system. • The fight or flight response. • Localisation in the brain and hemispheric lateralisation. • Ways of studying the brain, Revision Research Methods	Revision Internal Examinations
Research Methods spans over Year 12 and Year 13 teaching • Types of experiment • Types of observation • Self-report techniques • Correlations	

- Content analysis
- Case studies
- Aims, hypotheses, variables
- Sampling Techniques
- Pilot studies
- Experimental designs
- Observational designs
- Questionnaire construction.
- Variable control
- Demand characteristics
- Ethical considerations.
- Role of peer review in the scientific process.
- The implications of psychological research on the economy.
- Reliability across all methods of investigation.
- Types of validity across all methods of investigation.
- Features of science including objectivity and the empirical method.
- Reporting psychological investigations.
- Qualitative and quantitative data collection.
- Primary and secondary data including meta-analysis.
- Descriptive statistics
- Presentation of quantitative data.
- Correlation coefficients.
- Levels of measurement
- Statistical testing
- Probability and significance.
- Factors affecting the choice of statistical tests.

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Approaches and Social Influence end of topic tests
Term 2	Attachment, Psychopathology and Memory end of topic tests
Term 3	Biopsychology end of topic tests – Paper 1 and Paper 2 mock exams

Year group	13
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Rationale for sequencing	Upon completion of the Year 12 content, Issues and Debates is taught first as this then forms the basis for all AO3 marks. Research methods is taught across Year 12 and Year 13 ensuring students are able to relate certain methods to certain topics within the Psychology curriculum. Students always like to delve straight into more “interesting” topics and that is why eating behaviour is taught in the first half term followed by the two remaining options. All content is taught by the Easter break which allows time for exam practice and revision sessions.
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Term 1	
Half term	Half term
Issues and Debates Research Methods	Aggression Research Methods
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
Relationships	Schizophrenia  Learning about climate change includes understanding its psychological effects , such as eco-anxiety, trauma from natural disasters, or feelings of helplessness.
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
Revision of all content	External Examinations

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	End of topic tests
Term 2	End of topic tests and Mock Papers x 3
Term 3	Practice Exam Questions