

## Curriculum Rationale

<b>Subject</b>	<b>A-level Psychology</b>
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	<b>Key Stage 5</b>	
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### Intent

The educational purpose of Psychology is to enhance students' awareness about themselves and others. Psychology students will learn about all aspects of human thoughts, emotions and behaviours. This will help pupils in all areas of their lives by improving their interactions with other people and enhancing their ability to understand and regulate their own emotions and behaviours. Additionally by learning about mental illness, the young people will be better equipped to fight stigmatisation and ignorance in this area.

Apart from the direct benefits of learning psychology, it also indirectly facilitates learning in many other subjects. Pupils will obtain skills which enhance learning and memory performance and improve their ability to cope with stress. Psychology modules learnt comprise an important part of other lessons like Business, sport, biology and lessons from the Humanities and Social Sciences. Psychology generally provides excellent training in analytical thinking and scientific research methods that are applicable to a broad range of academic topics.

Similarly diverse are the occupational areas in which psychology is relevant and important. Psychologists are needed in a variety of contexts which include research, healthcare and educational posts in the private and public sector, various organisations and corporations, legal and clinical settings, charities, social services and more. Having a background in psychology is of considerable benefit in any work setting which includes team work, working with clients, advertising, and working under pressure.

The pupils will explore a variety of perspectives on the study of human behaviour. The key approaches this course focuses on are biopsychology, behaviourism, social learning theory, cognitive psychology, the psychodynamic approach and the humanistic approach. Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on the development of research skills and students will become competent in methodologies commonly used for the investigation of human behaviour.

During the first year, pupils will be introduced to memory and forgetting, aspects of social influence, psychological disorders and child development. During the second year, the pupils will explore ways in which psychological theory and research are applied. Specific topics covered include cognition and development, schizophrenia and forensic psychology. In addition to this, pupils will become familiar with common debates and issues in psychology for example the gender and cultural bias that seems to be embedded in psychological theory, ethical issues concerning research, nature vs nurture and more.

The AQA syllabus has been chosen because it has proven to be clear, engaging and easy-to-use, ensuring that pupils are helped as much as possible in their learning. This qualification introduces students to basic knowledge of all areas of psychology and it promotes the development of critical analysis, independent thinking and research skills. The AQA specification ensures that the topics have been updated so that they include the latest advances in the subject.

### Implementation

Lessons will include power point presentations by the teacher, relevant videos, activities, classroom debates and discussions, independent revision, self and peer assessment, homework, exam preparation, mock tests and more.

They will be structured in a way that aims at maximising classroom learning to better prepare the pupils for their A-Level exams and to lessen their final workload. Students will be required to keep their personalised portfolios organised and up to date in a way that will facilitate revision. Each lesson will provide the opportunity for students to link the information learnt to possible exam questions, so that by the end of the course they will be fully competent in performing at an A-level standard. Their work will be assessed and pupils will be expected to respond to comments made by correcting and completing their tasks.

The A-level assessment is comprised of 3 papers. The assessments will use multiple choice, short answer and extended writing/essays to assess knowledge, understanding, and application and evaluation skills.

The first written paper is on 'introductory topics in psychology' and it focuses on topics related to 1) social influence, 2) memory, 3) attachment and 4) psychopathology. This exam will last 2 hours and it accounts for 33.3% of the final A-level result. Each of the 4 sections will include multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions and will receive a maximum of 24 marks (96 in total).

The second written paper is on 'psychology in context' and it focuses on topics related to 1) approaches in psychology, 2) biopsychology, and 3) research methods. This exam will last 2 hours and it accounts for 33.3% of the final A-level result. Each of the 3 sections will include multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions. The first 2 sections receive a maximum of 24 marks and the 3<sup>rd</sup> section receives a maximum of 48 marks (96 in total).

The third written paper is on 'issues and options in psychology' and it focuses on topics related to 1) Issues and debates in psychology 2) cognition and development, 3) Schizophrenia and 4) forensic psychology. This exam will last 2 hours and it accounts for 33.3% of the final A-level result. Each of the 4 sections will include multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions and will receive a maximum of 24 marks (96 total).

## **Impact**

Students of psychology will obtain a better understanding of why people think, feel and behave the way they do. This will result in increased self-confidence, successful careers, optimum relationships, improved communication and overall better wellbeing.

This kind of in depth insight into human nature could help our students to improve their decision making, to understand and manage stress and emotional dysregulation, to increase their social skills and to understand and combat prejudice, discrimination and stigmatisation.

The importance of these skills is clear in all areas of the academic, professional and personal lives of our students. In Leaf Studio this is emphasised due to students' dedication to their specialisms. Our students work extremely hard in challenging environments, in various teams of different

backgrounds and are quite often exposed to high levels of stress and distress. The development of social skills, and of techniques for stress management and emotion regulation in these circumstances is indispensable.

Students of psychology will ultimately be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills which will promote their overall wellbeing and enable them to perform optimally in all areas of their daily lives, currently and in the future.