



Year 7 Curriculum 2025/26

At Dunottar we want to add value to every pupil so that, no matter what a child's individual abilities are, they are challenged and supported to develop a love of learning and to be prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Our Warrior Learner concept encourages our pupils to embrace the behaviours of aspiration, tenacity, curiosity, creativity, inclusivity, collaboration and independence. Lessons are designed to allow pupils to display these behaviours and reporting at KS3 refers directly to these.

Lessons are well-paced, challenging and fun. Within the curriculum each pupil is encouraged to achieve his/her full potential. The curriculum aims to educate the whole person through creative thinking and creative learning and the curriculum at Dunottar School extends far beyond the classroom and is enriched by a wide range of co-curricular activities.

On the following pages you will find an overview of the topics covered in each subject during Year 7.

English

The aim of the Key Stage 3 English curriculum is to provide pupils with a solid foundation for the GCSEs in English Language and English Literature. This will equip your child with the necessary knowledge, skills and confidence to realise their potential.

The English department follows the skills-based United Learning mastery curriculum, which is linked to the national curriculum.

It covers evidence-based reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, which we develop through fiction and nonfiction, and a wide range of related activities.

At Key Stage 3, pupils have the opportunity to study contemporary and classic poetry, prose and drama, which might be from the British literary heritage or other cultures. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are integrated into the curriculum.

In Year 7, pupils study the following:

- Poetry from other cultures
- From Beowulf to the Bard: an introduction to the history of English literature
- Modern nonfiction
- Modern prose
- Oracy: a public speaking competition

The best way for pupils to develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills is through reading as widely as possible outside the classroom; to support this, we set reading homework through Sparx Reader, an online reading platform designed to improve students' literacy skills and encourage a love for reading. To broaden their experience of reading further, Year 7 also enjoy regular library lessons in which students are introduced to new authors and genres. In terms of nonfiction, the school subscribes to The Day, a news app that we highly recommend for broadening pupil knowledge of current affairs.

The department runs a lunchtime book club and an ezine club for aspiring journalists.



Mathematics

The aim of the maths curriculum is to broaden, develop and inspire pupils in all strands of mathematics; giving them a solid foundation for the Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics that we teach over three years, beginning in Year 9. The maths department follows an adapted United Learning curriculum in Year 7 and 8, focusing on mastery and the application of their skills across contexts.

In Year 7, the pupils study:

- Whole numbers and decimals calculations
- Measures, perimeter and area
- Factors and multiples
- Statistics
- Angles and 2D shapes
- Transformations
- Fractions, decimals and percentages
- Order of operations
- Expressions, formulae and equations

All pupils in the year group have their maths lessons at the same time and are taught in ability sets. All sets follow the same flow of topics meaning that pupils can easily be moved from one set to another to maximise their learning. In the spring term, a large number of pupils have the opportunity to compete in the Junior Maths Challenge, a national competition. Each pupil has access to Sparx, an online homework and independent learning platform. All homework will be set using this intuitive programme with follow up support, or stretch and challenge tasks created from their homework responses.

Sciences

The Science Department aims to develop global citizens that can make informed decisions on scientific issues that affect our lives today and in the future. Our values include curiosity, independent thought, perseverance and communication.

The Year 7 Science pupils are taught in mixed ability classes - 4 lessons per week and have separate lessons in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The course follows our own scheme of work based on the National Curriculum. Lessons are designed to be interactive and consist of practical activities, data logging, group and individual work. Throughout the course the pupils develop their scientific knowledge and, alongside this learning, there is an emphasis on developing their independent working skills and the skills needed to apply their knowledge to new situations.

In Year 7 the topics covered are as follows:

Biology

- Cells and tissues
- Reproduction and variation
- Ecological relationships and classification

Chemistry

- What is it made of?
- Using Earth's resources

Physics

- Space Mission
- Energy



Foreign Languages

Spanish:

In Spanish we cover the vocabulary of topics such as the alphabet, numbers, greetings, days of the week, months, birthdays, family members and personal descriptions. We learn about pronunciation, articles and gender, present tense, possessive adjectives, question words and connectives. Throughout the year we develop the four key skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Pupils are also encouraged to engage with Hispanic culture and have the opportunity to complete a number of cultural projects.

French:

In French we cover vocabulary of topics such as alphabet, numbers, greetings, pets, colours, stationery and equipment, likes/dislikes, school subjects, weather, free time activities and town. We learn about French phonics, articles and gender, singular/plural and present tense verbs. Throughout the year we work on the four key skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Lessons focusing on Francophone culture take place every half term, allowing pupils to broaden their cultural knowledge of French speaking countries around the globe.

Geography

We start Geography at Dunottar with an exploration of a fantastic place in every continent of the planet from the favelas of Rio, the cascading waters of Victoria Falls and the stunning coral ecosystems of the Great Barrier reef; pupils are introduced to the awe and wonder of our home through immersive technologies, making full use of the iPads and VR headsets. Each place is studied whilst integrating map and cartographical skills. This is followed by a global study of hazards and why some places are more at risk than others through our 'What makes our earth restless' unit. Assessments at the end of each unit are varied and will range from display work to extended writing and oral presentations giving pupils a range of skills and building confidence through providing a variety of formative and summative assessments. These are used to ensure pupils are well informed about their learning and can be clear of their goals and targets for further improvement. Throughout this course pupils will access ICT through the use of GIS and Geographical apps on the iPads. Year 7 will also participate in off site fieldwork to put into practice some of their map skills.

History

The History curriculum is based on a series of enquiry questions. In Year 7, these questions are:

- What is History?
- How did the Normans conquer England?
- How powerful were English medieval monarchs?
- What travelled along the Silk Roads?
- How could medieval people increase their chances of going to Heaven?
- Who were the Tudors?
- Why was there a religious roller coaster in Tudor England?

Pupils are encouraged to think critically throughout and topics are explored through a variety of lesson activities, projects and discussions.

Religious Studies

In Year 7 the Religious Studies curriculum offers pupils the opportunity to develop enquiring and thinking skills, beginning with an exploration of some important but foundational theological and philosophical questions. In Year 7 we cover the following main topics:

Unit 1 - Introduction to Religious Studies: An introductory look into the subject of R.S and skills that are needed at secondary school within R.S.

Unit 2 - Hinduism: An introduction to the Eastern religions. The tradition of Hinduism is studied, and Dharma and Hindu deities will be examined.

Unit 3 The Big Story: An examination of some of the key stories from the Abrahamic Religions. The concept of prophecy will also be examined.

Unit 4 - The Nativity: Study of the Nativity Story and how the idea of prophecy connects the New and Old Testaments is examined.

Unit 5 - The Life and Death of Jesus Christ: An examination of the death and resurrection of Christ will take place. Pupils will study what happened in the last weeks of Jesus' life and investigate what resurrection mean to Christians.

The course will be expanded through guest speakers from *Good News for Everyone*. Pupils will also have the opportunity to visit *The Life of Jesus* play. Finally, students will enhance their independent Warrior Learner skills with the first of three Extended Learning Opportunities. The Year 7 project will focus on festivals around the world.

Art & Design

Pupils will explore the formal elements of line, tone, colour and texture through a variety of media throughout the year under the broad themes of still life and landscapes. Projects will include work in both dry and wet colour media. Drawing and painting skills play a vital part in the year forming the basis for experimentation and development of ideas. Pupils will also carry out research on relevant artists and use their sketchbooks to plan, record and evaluate their progress alongside all studio work.

Music

In Year 7, pupils can develop their appraising, composing, and performing skills in a variety of ways. The curriculum is designed to offer a broad and enriching music education so that all pupils are equipped with the necessary skills to enjoy, create, perform and understand music from a wide range of styles and historical periods. There is a focus on developing fundamental musical concepts so that as pupils move through their musical education, their knowledge is broadened but also deepened. As well as learning new skills such as the keyboard and the ukulele, all pupils are encouraged to sing during their music lessons, developing these skills as they go.

Pupils in Year 7 learn about:

Rhythm and Pulse: Pupils will learn about the beating heart of music and the importance that pulse plays in any genre of music. Pupils will build upon their knowledge of different note values by playing and composing their own rhythms. Pupils will learn about how different rhythmic features are used within different genres of music. It is important that pupils develop a secure sense of pulse both as individuals and as a class – musicianship flows from this.

Melody, Pitch and Patterns: This unit of work builds on prior skill development, encouraging pupils to develop individual performance skills on a melody instrument – for some pupils, it may be their first opportunity to do this; the opportunities will be on the keyboard, ukulele, or an instrument that they already play which they are able to bring into the lesson. Throughout this topic, pupils will continue to develop their keyboard skills by playing extracts from different pieces. Pupils will learn about the key musical elements such as how to notate pitch, identify texture, tempo, and dynamics, and also recap and develop their knowledge of instruments of the orchestra.

Hooks and Riffs: During this unit, pupils will have the opportunity to consolidate their musical from throughout the year; this includes their appraising skills, performance skills and composition skills. This unit of work builds on prior skill development, including ensemble music making; composition moments appear, inspired by the stimuli of ‘Bolero’ and ‘Minimalism’, while creative decisions can be made throughout in arranging. Whilst this scheme is knowledge-rich, active music-making is included in every lesson and students should develop instrumental skill alongside new knowledge acquisition.

Three-Dimensional Design

Three-Dimensional Design is on a half-yearly rotation with Food & Nutrition. In Year 7, the focus is on workshop health and safety, and developing the pupils' practical skills with the tools and machinery in the workshop. In addition to this, pupils are introduced to graphics communication, including CAD/CAM (Computer Aided Design/Manufacture) and learn about polymers and timbers.

Food & Nutrition

In Year 7, pupils will study a unit called “Chefs in training”. The pupils will learn about health and safety in the kitchen and key food safety temperatures, knife skills, including bridge and claw grip, they will also learn how to use the hob, oven and food processor. There is an emphasis on developing safe, organised and hygienic working routines in the kitchen. The dishes the pupils cook include sticks and dips, chicken fajitas, apple crumble, healthy chicken nuggets, scones and shepherd's pie potatoes. The pupils will also complete an independent cooking task, called “Super subway Sandwiches”. This task involves recipe designing, recipe writing, time planning, preparing a creative and delicious sandwich and self-evaluation.

Computing

In Year 7 we look at some questions such as ‘What makes a computer?’ and ‘How does a computer store text, numbers and images?’ Pupils will learn how to programme the BBC microbit computers to create games and applications such as a step-counter. Pupils then learn to develop algorithms to solve problems using Lego robots. They learn about key programming constructs through a varied programme of activities.

Drama

In Year 7, pupils acquire the building blocks for effective performance through their study of the History of Theatre. Pupils' learning starts with an exploration of the features Commedia dell'Arte and Melodrama. During this period, pupils will not only learn about the features of these theatrical periods and styles, they will also focus on skills such as: voice projection, spacing and audience manipulation. In the Spring term, pupils will study extracts from Macbeth from both an acting and technical perspective. This will build on their knowledge of bringing a text to life and help them establish the basics in set design, lighting, sound, costume, hair and makeup which they will require at GCSE. In the final term, Year 7 will focus on the basics of Stanislavski's system for actors during their exploration of Ernie's Incredible Illusions by Alan Ayckbourn.

Physical Education

During Key Stage 3 pupils follow a programme which includes rugby, football and cricket for the boys and netball, football and cricket for the girls. Swimming is half-termly for all pupils in the Autumn and Spring term, whilst athletics is embedded into the Summer PE rotations in preparation for athletics events and sports day. Within weekly 'PE' lessons pupils will complete 6-week blocks of Physical Activity. We cover a broad range of activities throughout our 'PE' curriculum and within each activity we bed in GCSE PE terminology, so we are building a strong foundation and understanding of sport (tactical and technical) and physical activity from Year 7 through to Year 9 when pupils chose their GCSE options.

All of our 'PE' lessons are geared up to help pupils identify how to live a healthy and active lifestyle through the participation of sport and physical activity. Throughout the PE and Games lessons, pupils will experience different roles, such as coaching and officiating too, to develop their communication and leadership skills. Co-curricular clubs run during both lunchtimes and after school for both competitive and recreational activities with fixtures taking place during the week and on Saturday mornings.

PSHEE/RSE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, Relationships and Sex Education)

PSHEE is taught as a timetabled lesson by allocated members of staff with a number of the themes being followed up in Assemblies, with outside speakers and in form times. The pupils follow a progressive course which builds on topics over the years.

Topics covered in Year 7 include: Building Relationships, Diversity, Developing Skills and Aspirations, Decision Making and Health, Puberty and Safety, Online Safety and Use of Digital Devices

Staff specialise in an area of delivery with the result being an expertise amongst the staff in approaching sometimes challenging topics. We ensure full coverage of RSE and the statutory expectations of the government guidance. As part of the PSHEE programme, pupils also follow a varied Careers programme where they investigate changing trends in the world of work, discuss the role of various jobs in society and practise collaboration skills to solve a problem.

Outdoor Education

At Dunottar School, our Outdoor Education programme is a powerful extension of our academic curriculum, using **practical bushcraft skills** to forge the Warrior Learning Traits of Aspiration, Creativity, Curiosity, Tenacity, Independence, Collaboration and Inclusivity. It is through the focused discipline of **bushcraft**—the art of thriving in the natural world—that our students build tangible skills and personal resilience. By mastering hands-on challenges like building shelters, sourcing materials, and managing a fire, they develop profound **tenacity** and **creativity**. Their **curiosity** is awakened as they learn to read the landscape, identify flora and fauna, and discover solutions using what nature provides.

Every **bushcraft** activity is a lesson in character. Navigating woodland trails fosters **independence** and confidence, while essential team tasks like constructing a camp or cooking outdoors demand deep **collaboration** and **inclusivity**, teaching students to listen, lead, and support one another.

Outdoor Education at Dunottar, facilitated by authentic bushcraft experience, inspires Warrior Learners—equipped with practical capabilities, a reflective mindset, and the confidence to succeed not only in the classroom but for life.

Subject	Lessons/fortnight	Subject	Lessons/fortnight
Maths	6	Games	4
English	6	General Science:	8
Library	1	Biology	
History	3	Chemistry	
Geography	3	Physics	
RE	3	PSHEE & RSE	2
French	3	Drama	3
Spanish	3	Computing	3
Art	3	Music	3
Food/DT	4	Outdoor Education	1
PE	2		