Bishop Stopford School

faith | justice | responsibility | truth | compassion

Social Sciences Faculty - Psychology

Curriculum

Key Stage 5 Curriculum Overview 2025-26 A Level Psychology – Y12 SK

	AUTUMN 1								AUTUMN 2						SPRING 1						SPRING 2					SUMMER 1						SUMMER 2							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Unit description	***Approaches*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** The Biological approach: The genetic basis of behaviour: genotype, phenotype and evolution. biological structures: Influence of biological structures and neurochemistry on behaviour. Cognitive neuroscience. The cognitive approach: the study of internal mental processes, the role of schema, the use of theoretical and computer models to explain and make inferences about mental processes.					***Debates overview*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of:** Nature, Nurture and Interactionism Free-Will and Determinism Reductionism – Holism and Level of Explanation Idiographic and Nomothetic approaches			***Memory and RMs*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony: leading questions, post-event discussion, and anxiety; the use of the cognitive interview. The multi-store model of memory (MSM): sensory register (SR), short-term memory (STM) and long-term memory (LTM). Features of each store: coding, capacity, and duration. RM: Experimental method. Types of experiment, laboratory and field experiments; natural and quasi experiments. Aims: stating aims, the difference between aims and hypotheses Hypotheses: directional and non-directional. Experimental designs: repeated measures, independent groups, matched pairs. RM: Case studies **Variables: manipulation and control of variables, including independent, dependent, extraneous, confounding; operationalisation of variables.** **Control: random allocation and counterbalancing, randomisation and standardisation.** **Sampling: the difference between population and sample; sampling techniques including: random, systematic, stratified, opportunity and volunteer; implications of sampling techniques, including bias and generalisation.**						***Memory and RMs*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** The working memory model (WMM): central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad and episodic buffer. Features of the model: coding and capacity. Explanations for forgetting; proactive and retroactive interference and retrieval failure due to absence of cues. Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony: leading questions, post-event discussion, and anxiety; the use of the cognitive interview. RET: cognitive schemas, neurons, neurochemistry and synaptic transmission, neural structures, Neuroscience **RM Reporting psychological investigations. Sections of a scientific report: abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion and referencing.** **The role of peer review in the research process.** **Features of science: objectivity and the empirical method; replicability and falsifiability; theory construction and hypothesis testing; paradigms and paradigm shifts.**						***Clinical Psychology and Mental Health and RMs*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** The behavioural, emotional, and cognitive characteristics of phobias, depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). The behavioural approach to explaining and treating phobias: the two-process model, including classical and operant conditioning; systematic desensitisation, including relaxation and use of hierarchy; flooding. NATURE-NURTURE / Interactionism The cognitive approach to explaining and treating depression: Beck's negative triad and Ellis's ABC model; cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), including challenging irrational thoughts. Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal and interval. RET: classical and operant conditioning, schemas **RM: Descriptive statistics: measures of central tendency – mean, median, mode; calculation of mean, median and mode; measures of dispersion; range and standard deviation; calculation of range; calculation of percentages; positive, negative and zero correlations.**					***Clinical Psychology and Mental Health and RMs*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** The biological approach to explaining and treating OCD: genetic and neural explanations; drug therapy Definitions in the field of mental health; deviation from ideal mental health, deviation from social/cultural norms, failure to function adequately and statistical infrequency. RET: Genes, genotype and phenotype, neural structures, and neurochemistry, Neuroscience **RM: Correlations. Analysis of the relationship between co-variables. The difference between correlations and experiments.** **Analysis and interpretation of correlation, including correlation coefficients, positive, negative and zero correlations.** **Distributions: normal and skewed distributions; characteristics of normal and skewed distributions**						***Approaches and RMs*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** The psychodynamic approach: the role of the unconscious. The structure of personality, that is ID, ego and superego, Defence mechanisms including repression, denial and displacement, psychosexual stages. RET: Features of science Humanistic Psychology: free will, self-actualisation and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, congruence, the role of conditions of worth. RM: the difference between experiments and correlations RET: Experimental Design Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test. When to use the sign test; calculation of the sign test. Probability and significance: use of statistical tables and critical values in interpretation of significance; Type I and Type II errors. Factors affecting the choice of statistical test, including level of measurement and experimental design. When to use. RM: Reliability across all methods of investigation. Ways of measuring reliability: test-retest and inter-observer; improving reliability. Types of validity across all methods of investigation: face validity, concurrent validity, ecological validity and temporal validity. Measurement of validity. Improving validity.		
Assessment	w/b 14/10 Approaches assessment – AO1, AO2, AO3								w/b 16/12 Social Influence, Memory and RMs (experimental method, type, hypotheses, Ethics) AO1, AO2, AO3						w/b 10/2 Social Influence, Memory and RMs (case studies, demand characteristics, investigator effects) AO1, AO2, AO3						w/b 31/3 Attachments, Clinical Psychology and Mental Health, RMs (observational techniques and methods) AO1, AO2, AO3						Psychopathology multiple choice (AO1) (self-assessment)						Mock exam: Approaches, Memory, Social Influence and RMs					

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques, and procedures.
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques, and procedures:
  - in a theoretical context
  - in a practical context
  - when handling qualitative data
  - when handling quantitative data.
- AO3: Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to:
  - make judgements and reach conclusions
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Social Sciences Faculty - Psychology

Curriculum

Key Stage 5 Curriculum Overview 2025-26 A Level Psychology – Y13 SK

	AUTUMN 1								AUTUMN 2						SPRING 1						SPRING 2					SUMMER 1						SUMMER 2							
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Unit description	***Biopsych*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of,** The divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic) The structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons. The process of synaptic transmission, including reference to neurotransmitters, excitation, and inhibition. The function of the endocrine system: glands and hormones. RET: synaptic transmission The fight or flight response including the role of adrenaline. GENDER BIAS – Beta Ways of studying the brain: scanning techniques, including (fMRI); (EEGs) and event-related potentials (ERPs); post-mortem examinations. RET: neurons and neurotransmitters								***Biopsych*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Localisation of function in the brain and hemispheric lateralisation: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language centres; Broca's and Wernicke's areas, split brain research. Plasticity and functional recovery of the brain after trauma. GENDER BIAS - Beta RET: Endocrine system: glands and hormones, Neuroscience						***Schizophrenia*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Positive symptoms of schizophrenia, including hallucinations and delusions. Negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including speech poverty and avolition. Issues in diagnosis: comorbidity, culture and gender bias and symptom overlap. GENDER and CULTURE BIAS Reliability and validity in diagnosis and classification of schizophrenia, including reference to co-morbidity, culture and gender bias and symptom overlap. The importance of an interactionist approach in explaining and treating schizophrenia; the diathesis-stress model. RET: validity and reliability, Interactionist/diathesis-stress models						***Schizophrenia*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Biological explanations for schizophrenia: genetics and neural correlates, including the dopamine hypothesis. Psychological explanations for schizophrenia: family dysfunction and cognitive explanations, including dysfunctional thought processing. Drug therapy: typical and atypical antipsychotics. Cognitive behaviour therapy and family therapy as used in the treatment of schizophrenia. RET: genes, neural structures, neurochemistry, synaptic transmission, cognition and schemas, CBT, classical and operant conditioning. Neuroscience					**Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Compare the approaches : RET: Approaches and debates RM: Implications of Psychological research for the Economy								
Assessm	w/b 9/9 RMs: Stats, Relationships, Approaches (Hum and Psychody) AO1, AO2, AO3								w/b 4/11 Relationships, RMs (Stats and Biopsych AO1, AO2, AO3						**MOCK exams** **RMs - *Clinical Psychology and Mental Health,* Approaches, Social Influence, Relationships or Addictions**						Practise Qs					Practise Qs (paper 3)							

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Social Sciences Faculty - Psychology

Curriculum

Key Stage 5 Curriculum Overview 2025-26 A Level Psychology – Y12 LM

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Unit description	***Approaches*** ***Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:*** The Learning Approach: i) the Behaviourist approach, including classical conditioning and Pavlov's research, operant conditioning, types of reinforcement and Skinner's research; ii) Social Learning Theory including imitation, identification, vicarious reinforcement, the role of mediational processes and Bandura's research.								***Social Influence*** ***Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:*** Types of conformity: internalisation, and compliance. Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence, and variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch. **RM: Demand characteristics and investigator effects** **RM: Ethics, including the role of the British Psychological Society's code of ethics; ethical issues in the design and conduct of psychological studies; dealing with ethical issues in research.** RET: social learning – Identification						***Social Influence*** ***Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:*** Explanations for obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority, and situational variables affecting obedience including proximity and location, as investigated by Milgram, and uniform GENDER BIAS - ALPHA . Dispositional explanation for obedience: the Authoritarian Personality. Explanations of resistance to social influence, including social support and locus of control. Minority influence including reference to consistency, commitment and flexibility. RET: conformity and obedience						***Attachments*** ***Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:*** **RM: Observational techniques. Types of observation: naturalistic and controlled observation; covert and overt observation; participant and non-participant observation.** **Observational design: behavioural categories; event sampling; time sampling.** **Content analysis and coding. Thematic analysis.** Animal studies of attachment: Lorenz and Harlow. Stages of attachment identified by Schaffer. Multiple attachments and the role of the father. Explanations of attachment: learning theory and Bowlby's monotropic theory. The concepts of a critical period and an internal working model. **RET: evolution and genotype, classical and operant conditioning, schemas.**					***Attachments*** ***Students will develop, and be able to apply,*** knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate: Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation'. Types of attachment: secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-resistant. Quantitative and qualitative data; the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. Cultural variations in attachment, including van Ijzendoorn. CULTURE BIAS RM: Primary and secondary data, including meta-analysis Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation. Effects of institutionalisation, including the English and Romanian Adoptees project. RET: Natural experiments Quantitative and qualitative data; the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships, including the role of an internal working model. RM: Self-report techniques. Questionnaires; interviews, structured and unstructured. Questionnaire construction, including use of open and closed questions; design of interviews.						***Relationships*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: self-disclosure; physical attractiveness, including the matching hypothesis; filter theory, including social demography, similarity in attitudes and complementarity. RET: Evolution and genotype							
Assessment	w/b 14/10 Approaches assessment – AO1, AO2, AO3								w/b 16/12 Social Influence, Memory and RMs (experimental method, type, hypotheses, Ethics) AO1, AO2, AO3						w/b 10/2 Social Influence, Memory and RMs (case studies, demand characteristics, investigator effects) AO1, AO2, AO3						w/b 31/3 Attachments, Clinical Psychology and mental health, RMs (observational techniques and methods) AO1, AO2, AO3					Clinical Psychology and mental health multiple choice (AO1) (self-assessment)						**Mock exam:** Approaches, Memory, Social Influence and RMs							

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Unit description	***Relationships*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's investment model of commitment, satisfaction, comparison with alternatives and investment. Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown: intra-psychic, dyadic, social and grave dressing phases. Online relationships: self-disclosure, use of deception, effects of absence of gating. Parasocial relationships: levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation. **RET: attachment types and the influence on adult relationships**								**Addictions** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Describing addiction: physical and psychological dependence, tolerance and withdrawal syndrome. Risk factors in the development of addiction, including genetic vulnerability, personality and social influences. **NATURE – NURTURE** Explanations for nicotine addiction: brain neurochemistry, including the role of dopamine, and learning theory as applied to nicotine addiction, including reference to cue reactivity. **REDUCTIONISM-HOLISM** **RET: neurochemistry, genotype and phenotype, operant and classical conditioning, SLT**						Addictions **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory as applied to gambling, including reference to partial and variable reinforcement; cognitive theory as applied to gambling, including reference to cognitive bias. NATURE – NURTURE Reducing addiction: drug therapy; behavioural interventions, including aversion therapy and covert sensitisation; cognitive behaviour therapy. FREE- WILL v DETERMINISM The application of Prochaska's six-stage model of behaviour change. RET: classical and operant conditioning, CBT,						***Issues and Debates*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, evaluate and illustrate from topics studied throughout the course:** Gender and culture in psychology: Universality and bias, Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias, Cultural bias including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism Humanistic approach (Hierarchy of Needs research), Relationships (BUSS research) Biopsych (Fight and Flight research) Psychopathology (IMH research) Free will and determinism: Hard determinism and soft determinism, Biological, environmental, and psychic determinism, The scientific emphasis on causal explanations, RET: Psychopathology – approaches to Phobias, Depression and OCD, Neuroscience The nature-nurture debate: The relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour, The interactionist approach RET: Psychopathology - approaches to, Sz - Bio and Psychological explanations, Interactionist and Diathesis-stress models					***Issues and Debates / Comparison Apps*** **Students will develop, and be able to apply, knowledge and understanding of, as well as analyse, interpret, and evaluate:** Holism and reductionism: Levels of explanation in psychology, Biological reductionism and environmental reductionism Sz: explanations, including cultural Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation RET: Case studies: Biopsych, Bio approach versus Memory research Social sensitivity in psychological research.							
Assessment	RM: Stats, Relationships, Approaches (Hum and Psychody) A01, A02, A03								Relationships, RMs, (Stats and Biopsych A01, A02, A03						**MOCK EXAMS** Clinical Psychology and Mental Health, Approaches, Social Influence, Relationships or Addiction						PRACTICE Qs					PRACTICE Qs												

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>Something More?

Curriculums at BSS are designed to nurture not only intellectual and physical development but also the spiritual growth of students. This will be through:

Encouraging students to reflect on their experiences, beliefs and purpose and to contemplate the big Questions of Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose?

Highlighting extraordinary people, events, and discoveries that inspire awe or investigating how a sense of awe has led to breakthroughs and creativity**.**

Using art, music, literature, and nature to inspire awe, wonder, and spiritual insight.

Encouraging creative expression to connect with the inner self and the transcendent.

Fostering a sense of belonging and interconnectedness with others, nature, and the universe.

Encouraging self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and moral reasoning.

Promoting open-ended investigations rather than just seeking right answers.

Using hands-on activities, field trips and experiments to immerse students in learning and evoke wonder.

How does our curriculum do >Something More?

🌍 1. Fostering a Sense of Belonging and Interconnectedness with Others, Nature, and the Universe

Unit	Examples
Attachment (Paper 1)	Explores how early bonds form the basis for emotional security and empathy. Reflecting on secure vs. insecure attachment fosters understanding of our shared need for connection.
Social Influence (Paper 1)	Topics like conformity, obedience, and social roles show how we are shaped by and respond to others in groups. Encourages reflection on community, identity, and social responsibility.
Relationships (Paper 3 option)	Explores intimacy, self-disclosure, and evolutionary bonding, highlighting human interconnectedness. Cultural differences in relationships broaden global understanding.
Addiction (Paper 3 option)	Recovery models like group therapy (e.g., 12-step programmes) show how community and shared struggle promote healing. Introduces themes of vulnerability and resilience.
Schizophrenia (Paper 3 option)	Raises awareness of social stigma and the importance of inclusion and compassionate support for those with mental health conditions. Promotes empathy and community care.
Biopsychology (Paper 2)	Brain plasticity and circadian rhythms show our deep biological connection with nature and time cycles. The body as part of a greater natural system.
Issues & Debates (Paper 3)	Nature vs nurture, cultural bias, and universality raise philosophical and moral questions about our shared human experience.

🧪 2. Using Hands-On Activities, Field Trips, and Experiments to Immerse Students in Learning and Evoke Wonder

Unit	Activities/Ideas
Memory (Paper 1)	Conduct class experiments on STM/LTM capacity and duration. Use real-life eyewitness testimony simulations to explore reconstructive memory.
Psychopathology (Paper 1)	Role-play diagnostic interviews. Build empathy through perspective-taking activities around anxiety, depression, or OCD.

Biopsychology (Paper 2)	Use EEG models, draw brain maps, or simulate split-brain experiments to bring brain research to life. Use sleep diaries to track circadian rhythms.
Research Methods (Paper 2)	Students design and carry out mini-experiments or surveys. Analyse real data to experience scientific inquiry and critical thinking.
Addiction (Paper 3)	Simulate operant conditioning using games. Run reinforcement schedule experiments or develop an awareness campaign for schools.
Relationships (Paper 3)	Create filter theory maps using fictional characters or real media couples. Test theories like equity theory with class polls.

✨ **3. Highlighting Extraordinary People, Events, and Discoveries That Inspire Awe or Investigate How Awe Drives Creativity**

Unit	**Inspiring People & Events**
Schizophrenia (Paper 3)	John Nash's story (Nobel Prize winner with schizophrenia, featured in *A Beautiful Mind*) evokes awe at the human mind and resilience.
Social Influence (Paper 1)	Stanley Milgram and Philip Zimbardo: their controversial, ground-breaking studies challenge moral norms and deepen understanding of obedience and authority.
Attachment (Paper 1)	John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth revolutionised our view of childhood and love. Harlow's monkey studies (ethics debated) changed childcare practices globally.
Addiction (Paper 3)	Bruce Alexander's *Rat Park* shows the power of environment and community, challenging reductionist views. Nora Volkow's work at NIDA links neuroscience to public policy.
Memory (Paper 1)	Elizabeth Loftus' work on false memories and the misinformation effect has reshaped law and psychology—an awe-inspiring example of psychological influence on justice.
Biopsychology (Paper 2)	Case studies like HM or Phineas Gage show the mystery and complexity of the brain. Functional imaging techniques (fMRI, PET) show the wonder of seeing the mind at work.
Psychopathology (Paper 1)	The evolution of treatments from trepanning to CBT shows the growing compassion and science behind mental health care.
Issues and Debates (Paper 3)	Exploration of free will, determinism, and universality brings philosophy, ethics, and psychology together in thought-provoking and awe-inducing ways.