

Criminology

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Curriculum Intent

Our criminology curriculum inspires a love of the subject through engaging and challenging learning, helping students become independent, resilient and inquisitive thinkers. Students develop a strong understanding of crime, the criminal justice system and theories of criminality, applying their knowledge to real-world contexts through WJEC's applied learning approach.

Over two years, students build confidence, maturity and analytical skills as they explore complex and sensitive issues. They are encouraged to think critically, participate in discussion and prepare for life beyond sixth form.

Criminology draws on sociology, law and psychology, supporting progression to higher education and careers in areas such as criminal justice, social work and policing.

Students develop key skills such as analysis, evaluation and debate, exploring topics like nature vs nurture and media influence on crime.

The course is structured across four units (Year 12: Units 1 & 2; Year 13: Units 3 & 4), allowing students to build on prior knowledge. Assessment includes both controlled coursework and exams. Throughout, students receive feedback to improve and achieve high standards.

Students also develop transferable skills like teamwork, leadership and problem-solving. The qualification can lead to either a certificate after year one or a full diploma after two, supporting progression to university or employment.

	Core Knowledge	Procedural Knowledge
Year 12	Unit 1: Changing awareness of crime (Dec Controlled Assessment) Unit 2: Criminological Theories (May Exam)	• Apply theories of crime (e.g. biological, psychological, sociological) to case studies or scenarios • Analyse criminal behaviour and situations using relevant concepts
Year 13	Unit 3: Crime scene to courtroom (Controlled assessment Nov) Unit 4: Crime and Punishment (June Exam)	• Evaluate explanations of crime (weigh up strengths, weaknesses and evidence) • Interpret and use evidence such as crime statistics, reports or case studies • Plan and carry out controlled assessments (e.g. research, campaigns, reports) • Construct extended written responses with clear

		arguments and supported judgements
Homework Students are expected to complete 5 hours of independent learning outside of the classroom, inclusive of revision/recall. Homework is set weekly to reinforce learning, develop exam skills and deepen students' understanding of real-world sociology. • Regular exam style questions • Retrieval practice using knowledge organisers • Independent reading of criminological articles, crime stats and current affairs • Use of online platforms and applied case studies • Past paper practice across unit 2 and unit 4 • Synoptic essay writing to develop evaluation skills		
Assessment Unit 1: Changing awareness of crime (Dec Controlled Assessment Y12) Unit 2: Criminological Theories (May Exam Y12) Unit 3: Crime scene to courtroom (Controlled assessment Nov) Unit 4: Crime and Punishment (June Exam)		
Links to Personal Development WJEC Level 3 Criminology contributes significantly to personal development by building a range of valuable skills and insights into crime and social control. It supports intellectual development by encouraging critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation of different criminological theories, helping students understand why individuals commit crime and how society responds. It also strengthens communication skills, as students are required to write structured reports, construct arguments, and apply evidence to real-life case studies. In addition, criminology promotes social and moral development by exploring issues such as criminal behaviour, justice, punishment, and inequality, helping students develop empathy, ethical awareness, and a sense of fairness. The subject further enhances cultural awareness by examining how crime and justice vary across different groups and societies, contributing to a broader understanding of diversity and social issues. Moreover, criminology supports personal identity development by encouraging learners to reflect on how social factors, such as upbringing, environment, and media, can influence behaviour and perceptions of crime. Finally, it prepares students for future life by equipping them with transferable skills and applied knowledge relevant to careers in areas such as policing, law, psychology, and social work, enabling them to engage responsibly and thoughtfully with the criminal justice system and wider society.		
How is my knowledge further developed in Year 13? (next academic year) Students revisit theories, concepts and case studies from Year 12 (Units 1 & 2) and apply them to new topics in Units 3 and 4. In Year 13, learners move beyond describing theories to analysing and evaluating them (e.g. comparing biological, psychological and sociological explanations of crime). Students are expected to connect knowledge across all four units—for example linking causes of crime (Unit 2) to criminal behaviour (Unit 3) and punishment (Unit 4). Learners apply knowledge to case studies and		

criminal justice processes, making justified decisions about crime, deviance and punishment.

Year 13 students are expected to work more independently, especially in controlled assessments, showing confidence, maturity and critical thinking.

Post 18: Students are better equipped to express their views, present balanced arguments and have an analytical, evaluative mind. Other students who have pursued a career at 18 have gone to work in Insurance, Law, Admin, Police, etc.