

De Lisle College Curriculum

“Rooted and grounded in Love”.

GCSE Psychology



Intent – ‘Rooted and grounded in Love’

Intent – Rooted

At De Lisle College, the GCSE Psychology curriculum has been designed to cultivate curiosity about human behaviour while fostering deep reflection on moral, social, and cultural issues. Grounded in both academic rigour and our Catholic ethos, the curriculum encourages students to explore not only how and why people behave the way they do, but how psychological insight can be used to serve the dignity of the individual and promote the common good.

Our intent is for students to gain a secure understanding of psychological concepts, theories, and research that span five core areas: biological, cognitive, social, developmental, and individual differences. Through engaging with these diverse approaches, students will begin to see how complex human behaviour is shaped by multiple factors, including biology, environment, culture, and personal experience.

Psychology at De Lisle is not just about learning facts — it is about becoming reflective, critical thinkers. Students are encouraged to use specialist vocabulary and terminology to engage in psychological enquiry, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research, and think metacognitively about how knowledge in psychology is constructed. They learn how to weigh evidence, develop arguments, and present conclusions — essential skills for life, learning, and responsible citizenship.

A vital strand of our curriculum is the application of psychology to real-world contexts, including mental health, memory, development, and social influence. These areas prompt students to explore important social issues such as prejudice, obedience, conformity, trauma, and learning. As students investigate these topics, they are encouraged to uphold the Catholic values of empathy, compassion, and human dignity, recognising that psychological challenges often stem from complex circumstances that deserve understanding rather than judgement.

The study of research methods gives students hands-on opportunities to carry out their own investigations ethically and responsibly, fostering a strong sense of integrity in how knowledge is developed and applied. These experiences reflect the Catholic commitment to truth and justice, as students consider the importance of ethical guidelines, consent, and respect when working with human participants. The study of ethics in psychology also provides a powerful platform for exploring the CST principles of rights and responsibilities and the preferential option for the vulnerable.

As students explore debates such as nature vs nurture or reductionism vs holism, they are challenged to think critically about how we explain human behaviour and how these explanations impact real people. Through this, they develop sensitivity to individual differences, respect for cultural diversity, and an appreciation for the role of free will and personal responsibility in shaping lives.

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At its heart, our GCSE Psychology curriculum supports students to grow in self-awareness, to understand others with empathy, and to appreciate the impact of social context on thoughts, emotions, and actions. These insights help them become more tolerant, emotionally intelligent, and inclusive — key aspects of their formation as people of faith and moral integrity.

We also nurture essential transferable skills such as working independently, analysing data, applying evidence to unfamiliar scenarios, and communicating ideas clearly in extended writing. These are valuable not only in psychology but in further study, the workplace, and public life.

Ultimately, our intention is for students to leave GCSE Psychology with:

- A firm grounding in psychological knowledge and inquiry.
- A deepened understanding of the human person.
- The ability to evaluate and apply psychological ideas ethically and responsibly.
- A commitment to promoting wellbeing, fairness, and dignity in the communities they live and work in.

This reflects our mission as a Catholic school: to educate the whole person, to seek truth, and to **prepare students to use their learning in service of others.**



Psychology

Year 10



De Lisle College
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Curriculum Outline

Link to Catholic Social Teaching:

The Paper 1 topics in Edexcel GCSE Psychology—covering Development, Memory, Psychological Problems, The Brain and Neuropsychology, and Social Influence—connect deeply with key principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Understanding human development and memory highlights the **dignity of all people**, reminding us to respect every individual's unique growth and experiences. Exploring psychological problems encourages **solidarity** and the **option for the poor**, as it fosters empathy and support for those facing mental health challenges, particularly the most vulnerable. Studying the brain's functions and neuropsychology reflects the commitment to the **common good**, as advancements in this area promote well-being and improved care for all. Finally, social influence relates to **participation** and **subsidiarity**, emphasizing the importance of each person's voice and encouraging responsible, positive involvement within communities. Together, these topics help students appreciate how psychology not only explains human behaviour but also aligns with ethical values that promote respect, care, and justice in society.

Advent 1	Research Methods	Advent 2	Social Influence & Memory
Description	Psychological research is central to psychology. Research underpins psychological explanations and is critical to the scientific process. In psychology, as in other sciences, we suggest theories concerning human behaviour and then test them using psychological investigations or studies. The research can be used to support, reject or refine a suggested theory. Then more research is conducted. This is how scientific knowledge is built. Like most subjects, psychology uses a variety of research methods and techniques to explore human behaviour. Just as in geography, where you may conduct a questionnaire or take soil samples, each different research method has a different procedure and a different set of issues involved in the process.	Description	Social influence is about how others – groups and individuals – can influence your behaviour. We tend to believe that we make our own decisions and choose our own behaviour, but often other people can impact and influence us. Have you ever been a bystander at an incident? Did you stand by and watch or choose to help? We like to believe that in an emergency situation we would be the one to intervene and help. However, there are a number of factors that determine whether or not you are willing to help, depending on the situation and what type of person you are. It is really important to understand how others influence our behaviour because then we can promote good behaviour and prevent bad behaviour, such as bullying. Social psychology can give us insight into why we behave in certain ways around others and how we can go about understanding ourselves better in our social world.

	In this topic, you will explore how psychological research is designed and how analysis takes place, as the types of research methods used by psychologists. It is important that you take practical opportunities throughout this course, as you may be asked to design your own investigation or comment on a research study in the examination. These opportunities also give you practical application of your knowledge and help you to develop your psychological imagination.		Memory is central to being human. Imagine your life without memory: you would not know who you are, where you came from, who your family is, what you were doing at any time in the past and what you planned to do after school. So memory can be seen as an anchor to the past, allowing us to understand what is currently happening, and to project ourselves into the future. Understanding how memory works can help our own memory improve and can also help us support those whose memory does not work as well as others. In this topic, you will explore different psychologist's views of how memory works by looking at the way in which we remember and forget things. You will learn about the different memory stores, such as the theory proposed by Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968). You will also learn about how memory can be reconstructive as our recollection of an experience can differ slightly to what actually happened.
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Lent 1	Memory & Developmental	Lent 2	Developmental and The Brain and Neuropsychology
Description	This term continues the exploration of memory, building on prior knowledge to deepen understanding of how memory functions in everyday life. Students will further examine key psychological theories and concepts related to memory processes, including how and why we remember or forget. The focus remains on applying this understanding to both personal memory improvement and real-world contexts, such as supporting individuals with memory difficulties. In this topic, students will explore how and why we develop the way we do, both mentally and emotionally. They will learn that our development is influenced by a combination of what we are born with (nature) and what happens to us as we grow up (nurture). Students will reflect on their own experiences of growing up and how they have gained new abilities over time. We will look at how people’s thoughts, beliefs, and abilities change from childhood through to adulthood, using key psychological theories to explain these changes. For example, students will study the work of psychologists like Jean Piaget, who looked at how thinking develops in stages, and Carol Dweck, who explored how having a “growth mindset” can help us learn better. This topic helps students understand themselves and others better, and encourages them to think about how people learn, how they change, and what can help or hinder personal growth. It also builds important skills like reflection, evaluation of evidence, and applying psychological ideas to real-life situations.	Description	This term continues the study of how we develop and change over time, building on key psychological theories introduced previously. Students will deepen their understanding of the factors that influence personal growth, including how we learn, think, and form beliefs. The focus remains on applying this knowledge to everyday life and recognising how development shapes who we are and how we interact with the world around us. In the brain and neuropsychology topic, students will explore how the brain works and why it is such an important part of who we are. They will learn about the different areas of the brain and the roles they play in controlling everything from movement and memory to emotions and decision-making. Students will also investigate what happens when parts of the brain are damaged or don’t function typically, and how this can affect a person’s behaviour. The topic includes studying real-life cases and research to understand these effects better. In addition, students will learn how psychologists and scientists study the brain — from early methods to modern-day technology like brain scans — and how our understanding of the brain has developed over time. This topic links science with psychology and helps students understand both themselves and others in a deeper, more informed way.

Pentecost 1	The Brain and Neuropsychology and Psychological Problems	Pentecost 2	The Brain and Neuropsychology and Psychological Problems
	This term, students will continue to develop their understanding of the brain and its role in controlling behaviour. Building on previous learning, they will explore how different areas of the brain function, what happens when the brain is damaged, and how research into the brain has evolved. The focus remains on linking neuropsychology to real-life examples and deepening scientific understanding of behaviour. Psychological problems topic, students will explore the growing issue of mental health and how it affects individuals and society. With around one in four people experiencing a mental health problem each year, understanding these issues is more important than ever. Students will focus on two key conditions: unipolar depression and addiction. They will learn what these problems involve, what symptoms people experience, what might cause them, and how they can be treated. This includes looking at both biological and psychological explanations, as well as different approaches to treatment such as therapy and medication. The topic also encourages students to think about wider issues, such as the impact of mental health on families and communities, and how society views mental illness. A key aim is to promote understanding and reduce stigma by exploring real-life examples, scientific research, and current attitudes toward mental health.	Description	This term, students will continue to develop their understanding of the brain and its role in controlling behaviour. Building on previous learning, they will explore how different areas of the brain function, what happens when the brain is damaged, and how research into the brain has evolved. The focus remains on linking neuropsychology to real-life examples and deepening scientific understanding of behaviour. This term, students will continue to explore key mental health issues by building on their understanding of depression and addiction. The focus will be on deepening knowledge of causes, symptoms, and treatments, while also considering the wider impact of mental health problems on individuals and society. This topic continues to promote awareness and challenge stigma through real-world examples and psychological research.

Psychology

Year 11



De Lisle College
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Curriculum Outline

Link to Catholic Social Teaching:

The Paper 2 topics in Edexcel GCSE Psychology—Research Methods, Criminal Psychology, and Sleep and Dreaming—are closely aligned with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The study of psychological research embodies the **dignity of all people** by ensuring that investigations are conducted ethically and respectfully, valuing each participant's rights and well-being. Research methods promote **participation** and **subsidiarity**, encouraging individuals to have a voice in how studies are designed and applied, fostering inclusive and collaborative knowledge-building. Exploring criminal psychology relates strongly to **solidarity** and the **option for the poor**, as it calls for empathy toward offenders and victims alike and urges society to prioritize rehabilitation and social justice, particularly for the marginalized. Additionally, the examination of sleep and dreaming connects with the principle of the **common good** by enhancing our understanding of human health and wellbeing, promoting practices that support the holistic flourishing of individuals within the community. Collectively, these topics demonstrate how psychology can contribute to a just and compassionate society that respects human dignity and advances the welfare of all.

Advent 1	Criminal Psychology	Advent 2	Criminal Psychology
Description	In this topic, students will explore the fascinating field of criminal psychology, which applies psychological theories to understand criminal behaviour. Students will investigate key questions such as: Why do people commit crimes? Are criminals born or made? And how can we prevent or treat criminal behaviour? The topic covers both biological and psychological explanations for criminality, including the influential theory proposed by Hans Eysenck. Students will examine whether criminal behaviour is learned through experience or influenced by personality and genetics.	Description	This term, students will continue to build on their understanding of criminal psychology by exploring different explanations for criminal behaviour and how psychology is used in crime prevention, punishment, and rehabilitation. The focus remains on applying psychological theory to real-world issues and evaluating how effective these approaches are in reducing crime.

	As well as understanding causes of crime, students will also consider how society responds to it. They will evaluate different forms of punishment (such as prison sentences and community service) and consider how effective these are in reducing crime. The topic also explores how psychology can support the rehabilitation of offenders, helping them to change their behaviour and reduce reoffending. By the end of this topic, students will have developed a deeper understanding of criminal behaviour and how psychology is used in the justice system to inform prevention, punishment, and treatment strategies.		
Lent 1	Sleeping & Dreaming	Lent 2	Sleeping & Dreaming
Description	In this topic, students will explore the vital role that sleep plays in our daily lives and overall well-being. While much of psychology focuses on waking behaviour, this unit examines what happens when we sleep—including the fascinating experience of dreaming. Students will learn why sleep is essential, looking at real-life examples such as accidents linked to sleep deprivation in high-risk jobs, and how different shift patterns can affect workers' health and safety. The topic also covers how sleep patterns change across the lifespan, with babies needing much more sleep than adults, highlighting sleep's role in growth and development. Dreams will be studied from different perspectives—some psychologists believe dreams provide insight into our mental health, while others argue that dreams are simply the brain's way of making sense of random activity. Students will consider ideas about whether dreams contain meaningful symbols related to our lives or are just random.	Description	This term, students will continue exploring the importance of sleep and dreaming, building on prior knowledge about how sleep affects health, development, and safety. They will deepen their understanding of different theories about why we dream and how sleep patterns change over time, while applying this knowledge to real-life situations.

	Overall, this topic will help students understand the importance of sleep and dreaming, encouraging them to think about how these processes affect their own lives and health.		
Pentecost 1	Revision	Pentecost 2	Revision
Description	In the final term, we will focus on revising all the content covered in Paper 1 of the GCSE Psychology course. This is a key opportunity for students to prepare thoroughly for their exam by revisiting core topics and practicing exam skills. What will we do? • Exam Strategy and Planning: Students will learn how to plan their revision effectively by creating revision timetables to manage their time. We will discuss how to break down topics into manageable chunks and avoid last-minute cramming, helping students feel confident and organized. • Understanding the Exam Structure: Paper 1 is a 1 hour 45-minute exam worth 55% of the final GCSE Psychology grade. It includes questions from six sections, covering the first five core topics and an issues and debates section. We will review the types of questions students will face, including multiple-choice, short answers, and extended essay-style responses. • Assessment Objectives (AOs): We will focus on the three key skills tested in the exam: ○ AO1: Demonstrating knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts and theories	Description	In the final term, we will concentrate on revising all the content for Paper 2 of the GCSE Psychology course, helping students prepare confidently for this important exam. What will we do? • Exam Strategy and Preparation: Students will learn how to approach the Paper 2 exam, including understanding the structure and types of questions they will face. We will also discuss the importance of bringing essential equipment such as a scientific calculator, pencil, ruler, and black pen. • Research Methods and Maths Skills: Research methods make up 20% of the final grade and are mainly tested in Section A of Paper 2. Students will revise how to carry out psychological research, including designing investigations and suggesting improvements. We will also focus on the mathematical skills needed (worth 10% of the final grade), such as completing calculations, interpreting graphs, and drawing tables or charts. • Exam Structure: Paper 2 lasts 1 hour 20 minutes and is worth 45% of the final GCSE Psychology grade. It is split into six sections:

	○ AO2: Applying psychological knowledge to new situations ○ AO3: Analysing and evaluating psychological information, making judgements, and drawing conclusions • Topic Revision: Students will review all compulsory topics covered in Paper 1. This will include revisiting important theories, studies, and psychological concepts. • Practice with Command Words: We will look closely at exam command words like identify, describe, explain, and assess, ensuring students understand what each word asks them to do and how to answer effectively to gain full marks. • Exam Skills Development: Students will complete practice questions and receive feedback to develop their ability to answer different question types confidently and accurately. Goal: By the end of the term, students will be well-prepared with strong knowledge, exam skills, and confidence to successfully tackle Paper 1.		○ Section A covers research methods and maths skills (all questions must be answered). ○ Sections B–F cover five optional topics, of which students will answer questions from two chosen topics. Students will practice multiple-choice, short-answer, and extended-response questions, including a 12-mark essay in Section A and 9-mark essays in the optional topics. • Command Words and Question Types: We will focus on important command words like draw, calculate, assess, and evaluate, explaining what each requires and how to answer effectively. For example, 'assess' questions require careful evaluation and a reasoned conclusion, while 'evaluate' questions ask for a detailed analysis of strengths, weaknesses, and alternative views. • Practice and Feedback: Students will complete practice questions across all sections of Paper 2, with opportunities to improve their answers based on teacher feedback. Goal: By the end of the term, students will have a strong understanding of research methods, maths skills, and the optional topics they have studied. They will be confident in answering all question types and ready to perform their best in Paper 2.
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