



THE IVY HOUSE SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Tazkiyah and Personal Development Policy

Version 3 | Two Branch Architecture | Two Lessons Per Week

June 2026 | For September 2026 opening
Inspired Minds. Empowered Futures.

1. Purpose of this Policy

The Ivy House Secondary School for Girls exists to form young women whose souls are cared for as carefully as their academic learning. This policy sets out how the school's Tazkiyah and Personal Development curriculum is structured, delivered, assessed, and integrated with the school's statutory safeguarding duties.

Our Tazkiyah curriculum is built on the work and teaching of Imam Abu Hamid Al Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, principally his *Ihya Ulum al Din* (the Revival of the Religious Sciences). His framework is delivered through two complementary branches across the five year curriculum: Maqasid al Shariah (the protections established in his foundational work *al Mustasfa*) and Purification of the Soul (the inward formation work of the *Ihya*). Every year, every term, every lesson of our Tazkiyah curriculum sits within one of these two branches of Imam Al Ghazali's teaching.

This policy replaces version 2. It reflects the curriculum's current two branch architecture, the move to two Tazkiyah lessons each week, and the introduction of the Stillness Lesson as the school's distinctive contemplative practice.

2. Imam Al Ghazali and the Classical Tradition

Imam Abu Hamid Al Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, was born in Persia in 1058 and is one of the most influential scholars in the entire Sunni Islamic tradition. He held the most prestigious teaching post of his age at the Nizamiyya in Baghdad, then left it to spend a decade in study and quiet reflection, returning to write the work that has shaped Muslim hearts for nine centuries: the *Ihya Ulum al Din*.

Our curriculum draws its principal teaching from Imam Al Ghazali's work. The *Ihya* is treated by classical scholars as one of the most important books in the Islamic library after the Quran itself. It is taught in four great quarters: worship (*Ibadat*), the customs of daily life (*Adat*), the destroyers of the soul (*Muhlikat*), and the saving virtues (*Munjiyat*). Each quarter contributes specific source material to our curriculum across the five years.

Imam Al Ghazali's second foundational work, *al Mustasfa min Ilm al Usul*, established the five Maqasid al Shariah as the higher objectives of Islamic guidance. This framework forms the first of our two curriculum branches. The classical tradition we draw from extends through Imam Ibn al Qayyim al Jawziyyah, Imam Ibn Rajab al Hanbali, and Imam Mawlud of Mauritania, all of whom developed and confirmed the teaching Imam Al Ghazali laid down. Their works form the supporting source library of our curriculum.

3. The Curriculum Architecture

Two branches

Our Tazkiyah curriculum is built on two complementary branches from the classical Sunni Islamic tradition. These two branches run in parallel across all five years.

- Maqasid al Shariah. The five higher objectives of Islamic guidance established by Imam Al Ghazali in al Mustasfa. The protections of religion, self, intellect, lineage, and wealth. The outward life of the believer.
- Purification of the Soul. The classical Islamic teaching on the inward formation of the believer, drawing on Imam Al Ghazali's Ihya Ulum al Din and the wider tradition including Imam Ibn al Qayyim, Imam Ibn Rajab, and Imam Mawlud's Matharat al Qulub. The inward life of the believer.

The five year shape

Each year carries a single big enquiry question that names the developmental stage of the pupil's formation. Across the five years, a golden thread runs from Identity through Character, Worldview, Transformation, to Legacy.

- KS3 Foundation Class (Cycle A and Cycle B): Identity and Character. Who am I, and who am I becoming?
- Year 9: Worldview. How should I live in the world I have been given?
- Year 10: Transformation. How do I become a different person?
- Year 11: Legacy. What will I leave behind?

KS3 rolling cycle

The KS3 Foundation Class is taught as a two year rolling cycle. Pupils meet Cycle A in one year and Cycle B in the other. Across the two years, every pupil meets the foundational architecture of the curriculum twice, deepening on the second pass. Year 9, Year 10, and Year 11 each form their own year group.

4. Lesson Structure

Two lessons each week

Every pupil studies two Tazkiyah lessons each week. Each lesson runs for one hour. The two lessons are complementary and carry the same weekly enquiry question through two different modes of formation.

Lesson One: the Enquiry Lesson

The first lesson of the week is enquiry led. The pupil meets a question, studies the classical sources, discusses with her peers, and writes a personal journal entry. Each Enquiry Lesson follows a consistent structure.

- 0 to 5 minutes. Niyah opener. The teacher models setting the intention for the lesson.
- 5 to 35 minutes. Teaching from primary sources. Typically one Quranic verse, one Hadith, one passage from the Ihya or another classical work, and one Sirah or female Companion example.
- 35 to 55 minutes. Workshop. Pupils write a personal journal entry applying the lesson to their own life.
- 55 to 60 minutes. Closing. The teacher names the next lesson and sets the Niyah for the Stillness Lesson that will follow.

Lesson Two: the Stillness Lesson (Halqa al Sukoon)

The second lesson of the week is the Stillness Lesson, the school's distinctive contemplative practice. The Stillness Lesson is grounded in the classical Islamic tradition of *samt* (silence), *Tafakkur* (contemplation), and *Muraqabah* (watchful awareness).

Imam Al Ghazali in Book 24 of the *Ihya Ulum al Din* treats silence as a discipline of the heart in its own right. The Prophetic teaching that the believer says what is good or remains silent makes silence the believer's default, not an absence. The Prophetic example of the cave of Hira before revelation establishes the cultivated retreat from stimulation as the place where the soul hears Allah.

The Quranic foundation

The Quran encourages reflection, contemplation, and the use of intellect with striking consistency. Verses across the Quran close with the phrases *li qawmin yatafakkarun* (for a people who reflect), *li qawmin ya qilun* (for a people who use their intellect), *li qawmin yatadabbarun* (for a people who ponder), and *ulul albab* (people of understanding). These recurring closures appear after passages on creation, on the natural world, on the believer's daily life, on history, and on the Quran itself.

Allah commands the contemplation of the Quran directly. Surah Sad verse 29 names the Quran as a book sent down so that the believer may ponder its verses. Surah Muhammad verse 24 asks whether the believer reflects on the Quran or whether her heart has been sealed against it. Surah Al Imran verses 190 and 191 describe people of understanding as

those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and who reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.

These are the verses that found the Stillness Lesson. The classical Islamic disciplines of Tafakkur (reflection on creation and signs), Tadabbur (pondering of revelation), and Ta aqqul (the disciplined use of intellect) all draw from this Quranic pattern. The Quran does not ask the believer to think occasionally; it positions reflection as a recurring obligation upon the people of understanding. The Stillness Lesson is the school's structured response to that obligation, returned to our pupils as their inheritance from the classical scholarly tradition.

Our pupils live in continuous stimulation. They do not know what their own thoughts sound like when nothing is pulling at them. The Stillness Lesson teaches them. The practice is Tafakkur and Muraqabah as the classical Islamic tradition delivers them, drawn from the Ihya and the Prophetic example of the cave of Hira, taught to Muslim girls by Muslim women.

Stillness Lesson structure

Each Stillness Lesson carries the same enquiry question as the Enquiry Lesson earlier in the week, but rather than studying or discussing it, the pupil holds it in silence. The session has a clear, repeated shape.

- 0 to 5 minutes. Quiet entry. The teacher reads a Quranic verse or Prophetic teaching aloud and poses the week's enquiry question for silent reflection.
- 5 to 45 minutes. Structured silence. The duration of silence builds across the five years. KS3 pupils begin with 10 to 15 minutes of silence held inside a fuller structured lesson. By Year 11, pupils can hold 30 to 40 minutes of sustained structured silence.
- 45 to 55 minutes. Optional brief sharing. Pupils may share one sentence about what arose in the silence. Sharing is never required.
- 55 to 60 minutes. Closing dua. The teacher closes the session with a Prophetic dua.

Building the practice over five years

The Stillness Lesson is a discipline built across time. The duration of held silence increases as the pupil matures. KS3 Foundation Class: 10 to 15 minutes of silence. Year 9: 15 to 20 minutes. Year 10: 20 to 30 minutes. Year 11: 30 to 40 minutes. By the time she leaves us, our pupil can hold sustained silence, listen to her own conscience (the Nafs al Lawwama), and recognise the voice of her own soul.

5. Annual Lesson Counts

Two lessons each week across approximately 36 teaching weeks gives every pupil approximately 72 Tazkiyah lessons per year. Of these, 36 are Enquiry Lessons (one per week) and 36 are Stillness Lessons (one per week).

Across the five years of secondary schooling, every pupil will receive approximately 360 hours of Tazkiyah teaching. This is among the most substantial character formation commitments of any school in the country and reflects the school's settled view that the inward formation of the Muslim woman is at least as important as her academic preparation.

6. The LTP Units Across the Five Years

Each term of each year names a unit drawing principally from one of the two branches, with the other branch present in support. The full unit list across the curriculum is set out below. Detailed planning sits in the Long Term Plan version 10 and the medium term plans for each year.

KS3 Foundation Class (Cycle A)

- Autumn: Hifz al Din and the Heart. Why did Allah create me, and what makes a heart alive?
- Spring: Hifz al Aql and Hifz al Nafs. How do I take care of my mind and my body as a Muslim?
- Summer: Hifz al Nasl and Hifz al Mal. What do I owe to my family and to what Allah has given me?

KS3 Foundation Class (Cycle B)

- Autumn: Diseases of the Heart. What is forming inside me, and is it good?
- Spring: Faith and Influence. Who is shaping how I think and what I believe?
- Summer: Friendship and Protection. What protects me and what puts me at risk?

Year 9 (Worldview)

- Autumn: Poisons of the Heart. What corrupts the heart in the world I actually live in?
- Spring: Truth and Wisdom. Who tells the truth, and how do I know?
- Summer: Relationships and Responsibility. What do I owe to other people, and what do I owe to Allah?

Year 10 (Transformation)

- Autumn: Healing the Heart. Can the heart actually be healed, and if so, how?
- Spring: Resilience. How does faith carry me when life does not go to plan?
- Summer: Wealth and Scholarship. Can wealth become a test, and what is real scholarship today?

Year 11 (Legacy)

- Autumn: Love of Allah. What does it mean to love Someone I have never seen?

- Spring: Purpose and Legacy. What is a successful life worth living?
- Summer: Final Legacy Project. What is the woman of faith, character, wisdom and purpose I am becoming?

Branch leadership across the units

The Purification of the Soul branch leads in the autumn term of every year across the curriculum, plus the final integration term of Year 11. The Maqasid al Shariah branch leads in the spring and summer terms of every year. Each Maqasid is revisited at greater depth in each successive year.

7. Teacher Development for the Stillness Lesson

The Stillness Lesson requires a teacher who is comfortable holding silence themselves. This is a real teacher development requirement and is taken seriously by the school. Teachers delivering the Stillness Lesson receive training in the classical Islamic disciplines of Tafakkur and Muraqabah and in the practical pedagogy of structured silence with adolescents. Teachers who are not yet ready to lead the Stillness Lesson can lead the Enquiry Lesson while a more experienced colleague leads the Stillness Lesson, until the staff member is ready.

8. Assessment

Assessment in Tazkiyah is not graded examination. It is the deliberate practice of formation, captured in artefacts the pupil produces across her five years.

- Each Enquiry Lesson: the pupil writes a personal journal entry. The teacher reads each entry within 48 hours. Where any entry indicates harm or safeguarding concern under KCSIE 2026, the teacher follows procedure.
- Each Stillness Lesson: no written assessment. The practice is the practice.
- Each term: a named assessment artefact (Personal Reflection, Character self audit, Worldview Project, Transformation Portfolio, Legacy statement).
- End of Year 11: the Final Legacy Portfolio. Six artefacts presented to a panel of teachers.
- The five year reflection journal travels with the pupil across her five years and is the spine of the practice.

9. Statutory Alignment

Every statutory safeguarding requirement under KCSIE 2026 and the Department for Education's RSHE Statutory Guidance is delivered within this curriculum. Most is delivered through the Enquiry Lessons within the Maqasid and Purification of the Soul branches. Specialist safeguarding content that requires named external delivery is provided through the school's Assembly Programme, led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead with the school nurse and partner specialists. The Statutory Coverage Map is a companion document to this policy.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the Tazkiyah curriculum.
- The Curriculum Lead designs, reviews, and updates the curriculum and all its documents.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead leads the Assembly Programme's specialist safeguarding content.
- The Subject Lead for Tazkiyah delivers staff development and quality assures teaching.
- Class teachers deliver both the Enquiry Lesson and the Stillness Lesson, with continuing development support.
- The school nurse partners on physical and mental wellbeing assemblies.

11. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Curriculum Lead and approved by the Headteacher. The next review is due in June 2027. The Curriculum Lead may bring interim revisions for approval at any time.

Closing

The Ivy House Secondary School for Girls exists to form young women whose souls are cared for as carefully as their academic learning. The two branches of our Tazkiyah curriculum (Maqasid al Shariah and Purification of the Soul) and the two lessons each week (the Enquiry Lesson and the Stillness Lesson) are the structured commitment of the school to that work.

By the time she leaves us at the end of Year 11, our pupil has met every Maqsad at progressive depth across her five years. She has worked through the diseases and the cures of the heart. She has held sustained silence and learned the voice of her own conscience. She has produced a Final Legacy Portfolio that audits her five year journey. She walks into adult Muslim life as a woman of faith, character, wisdom, and purpose.

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