



CURRICULUM POLICY

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1. Rationale

We are currently within the greatest period of curriculum change for many years. The introduction of both new programmes of study and new methods of assessment have brought with them challenges- but also opportunities. We recognise and acknowledge that, during this period of transition, it will take time to change and develop our new curriculum but, within this process, the commitment to deliver excellence for our students, set out within this policy, remains constant.

The process that we are working through will be ongoing. The need for our curriculum to be flexible, adaptable and robust enough to meet the ever changing demands of the modern world, and best prepare our students for a life within it, is the cornerstone of this policy.

2. Legislation

This policy is designed to ensure that the school complies with, and exceeds, the expectations of all relevant legislation. We commit to meeting and surpassing the principles set out in The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, with regards to:

Curriculum:

- ❖ full-time supervised education for students of compulsory school age (constructed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996(1)), which gives students experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education
- ❖ that students acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills to the standard expected of students nationally
- ❖ where the principal language of instruction is a language other than English, lessons in written and spoken English so that students achieve the fluency of students nationally in speaking, reading and writing English
- ❖ where a pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan, education which fulfils its requirements
- ❖ personal, social, health and economic education which –
 - reflects the school's aim and ethos
 - encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- ❖ for students receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that:
 - is presented in an impartial manner
 - enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options
 - helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential
- ❖ where the school has students below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills
- ❖ where the school has students above compulsory school age, a programme of

- activities
- ❖ which is appropriate to their needs
- ❖ that all students learn and make progress at the rate expected of students nationally
- ❖ effective preparation of students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society

Teaching:

- ❖ enables students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
- ❖ fosters in students self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- ❖ involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
- ❖ shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
- ❖ demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught
- ❖ utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range
- ❖ demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and that students make good progress because teaching is planned using information from those assessments
- ❖ utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging students to act responsibly
- ❖ does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ❖ does not discriminate against students contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010

We also commit to meeting and exceeding the expectations set, with regards to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of our students. We will actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and will ensure that principles are promoted which:

- ❖ enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- ❖ enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- ❖ encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely
- ❖ enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- ❖ lead to further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- ❖ encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010

- ❖ encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England

We will preclude the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school and take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of students are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views:-

- ❖ while they are in attendance at the school
- ❖ while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school;
- ❖ in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere

3. Our Curriculum Policy Statement

Our School is a learning environment at the heart of its wider community. We promote the care of our students- setting, respecting and expecting high standards in all aspects of school life. Our primary aim is to meet the needs of our students, preparing them for adult and working life in the 21st century. The vision for our School's curriculum is to provide a broad and balanced education, based on the realities of modern life. We recognise that:-

- ❖ the world of 2020 will be very different to the world of today
- ❖ the pace of change is increasing and the need for flexibility is paramount
- ❖ students have, and will increasingly have, greater access to information and learning materials independently of school
- ❖ adulthood requires economic participation- students must be adequately prepared for this
- ❖ a curriculum defined purely in subject terms is not always well suited to equipping every young person with the knowledge, skills and understanding they will need for a fulfilling adult life
- ❖ curriculum delivery should be augmented by adults other than teachers. These could include support staff, graduates, artists, sports people and people from industry and business

Our curriculum is based on the following principles:-

- ❖ to have students at its heart, putting their interests above those of the school
- ❖ to ensure a curriculum that is fit for purpose, offering differentiation and personalisation
- ❖ to ensure a centre of excellence, in both learning and teaching
- ❖ to prepare all students for a successful adult and working life in a 21st century global society
- ❖ to achieve and then exceed national standards in achievement, attainment and progression
- ❖ to be committed to excellence and continuous improvement
- ❖ to value vocational and academic routes equally
- ❖ To nurture the talents of all and celebrate success
- ❖ to work at all stages to ease transition
- ❖ to involve the wider community

- ❖ to actively involve parents, carers and other stakeholders
- ❖ to foster a learning environment that is inspiring

4. Curriculum aims

The Shires aims to:-

- ❖ provide students with an exciting, rigorous and interesting range of challenging learning experiences and opportunities
- ❖ recognise the individual needs and talents of all students and facilitate development of their intellectual, moral, physical, social, spiritual and creative capacities
- ❖ ensure that the curriculum reflects statutory requirements and guidance, and yet is flexible and relevant to the varying needs of the students
- ❖ measure, assess and record the progress of each student in a systematic way, so that all students achieve their potential
- ❖ set achievable but challenging targets that promote an ethos of continual improvement
- ❖ prepare students to live as independently as their abilities and disabilities allow
- ❖ use individuals' interests and the wider community in which they live and work as a learning context and resource
- ❖ ensure that 'Every Child Matters'

5. Curriculum outcomes

The Shires' curriculum will:

- ❖ fulfil all statutory, framework and National Curriculum requirements
- ❖ lead to qualifications that prepare students for work or further education
- ❖ enable students to fulfil their potential
- ❖ meet the needs of students of all abilities
- ❖ provide equal access for all students to a full range of learning experiences beyond statutory guidelines
- ❖ prepare students to make informed and appropriate choices at points of transition
- ❖ help students develop lively, enquiring minds, an ability to question and argue rationally and an ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills.
- ❖ include a range of vital characteristics including breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression, continuity and coherence
- ❖ ensure continuity and progression within the school and between phases of education, increasing students' choice during their school career
- ❖ foster teaching styles which offer and encourage a variety of relevant learning opportunities
- ❖ help students to use language and number effectively
- ❖ help students develop personal moral values, respect for religious values and tolerance of other races' beliefs and ways of life
- ❖ help students understand the world in which they live
- ❖ meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs of our students
- ❖ incorporate a specific curriculum for key stage 3 which will focus on the core skills of numeracy and literacy and develop the personal, learning and thinking skills of all students

- ❖ incorporate a key stage 4 curriculum which meets the needs of students, parents and wider society
- ❖ offers a post-16 curriculum which is not constricted by the curriculum of the school alone but incorporates other schools/colleges which may be in partnership with the school

6. The 24 hour curriculum

The Shires operates a 24 hour curriculum. Students are learning throughout their waking hours from informal and incidental opportunities that arise as well as the more formal and planned activities that are provided both within the care and education settings. From the time the students wake up to the time they go to sleep, they are engaged in activities that effectively promote and develop basic communication skills, life and living skills, social skills and personal hygiene skills. Students are encouraged throughout their waking hours to develop as confident young people who have good levels of self-esteem. After school and at weekends The Shires provides a comprehensive programme of planned and free choice leisure activities. Whilst students are encouraged to take part in a range of additional leisure activities, they learn how to make choices and have the opportunity to opt out of planned activities if they wish to do so.

7. The curriculum for Key Stage 3 students

The curriculum for Key Stage 3 students draws on the National Curriculum programmes of study and focuses on the following key aspects:-

- ❖ linguistics (language and literacy)
- ❖ mathematics
- ❖ scientific development
- ❖ technological development (including information and communication technology)
- ❖ human and social development
- ❖ aesthetic and creative development (including physical development)
- ❖ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (including racial and cultural diversity)
- ❖ personal, social and health education and religious education (including sex/drugs/alcohol/solvents etc. and citizenship)
- ❖ community (ours and the wider community/the students as contributors and users)
- ❖ cultures, including racial cultural diversity
- ❖ work related learning (including careers)

Key skills include:-

- ❖ communication
- ❖ using and applying number
- ❖ information and communication technology
- ❖ working with others
- ❖ improving own learning and performance
- ❖ problem solving

Key Stage 3 students are taught for 4.75 hours per day for 4 days per week. In addition students receive weekly input from the speech and language therapist, the occupational therapist, the music therapist and the educational and clinical psychologists. The daily timetable is balanced so that students have a range of learning experiences. Activities are often linked to a termly topic or theme to help students to make better sense of their learning, but where there are no natural cross-curricular links, subjects are taught discretely.

Students follow individual schedules for literacy and numeracy and there is a strong focus in these areas on the development of basic key skills within a real life context. Students have ongoing access to interactive whiteboards and information and communication technology is taught both as a discrete subject and as a cross curricular skill. Students take part in 2 hours planned physical exercise per week, and there are additional opportunities for them to engage in physical activity during after school activities. History, geography and science are taught through a topic based approach wherever possible so that students have a context for their learning, and opportunities to revisit new ideas within different disciplines. Creative arts sessions bring together elements of art, music and design and technology, and there are regular opportunities for the students to develop the key skills in these areas across the curriculum.

Students at The Shires are taught modern foreign languages through the termly topics. Many of the students find communication difficult in their main language and so care is taken not to cause them confusion. Strong emphasis is placed on teaching the cultural dimensions of countries including France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Careers education and guidance is a key feature of both the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curriculum and students have frequent opportunities to experience the world of work and to consider their choices post 19.

8. The curriculum for Key Stage 4 and post 16 students

Students between the ages of 14 and 19 follow the ALL (Accreditation for Life and Living) curriculum. This curriculum has 10 areas of learning which link closely to the National Curriculum subjects. The areas of learning from the ALL curriculum are:-

- ❖ the environment
- ❖ the community
- ❖ home management
- ❖ world at work
- ❖ information and communication technology
- ❖ numeracy
- ❖ communication
- ❖ personal skills
- ❖ leisure
- ❖ creative arts

The statutory subjects that all students must study at KS4 are citizenship, English, information and communication technology, mathematics, physical education and science. The teaching of careers education, sex education, work-related learning and religious education is also

statutory. Although within the National Curriculum framework for Key Stage 4 students, creative arts and humanities subjects are optional, these subjects provide part of the core curriculum for students at The Shires as they provide very good vehicles for supporting the development of independent living skills, and for helping students to learn new leisure activities. History and geography are subsumed within the environment module in the ALL curriculum, and art, music, design and technology are subsumed within the creative arts module of the ALL curriculum. Work related learning is a key feature of The Shires' curriculum for Key Stage 4 students but is modified to meet the needs of the individual students. All KS4 students have access to information relating to Careers Guidance.

Key Stage 4 and post 16 students are taught for 4.75 hours per day for 4 days per week. In addition students receive weekly input from the speech and language therapist, the occupational therapist, the music therapist and the educational and clinical psychologists. The daily timetable is balanced so that students have a range of learning experiences. Activities are often linked to a termly topic or theme to help students to make better sense of their learning, but where there are no natural cross-curricular links, modules from the ALL curriculum are taught discretely. Statutory requirements are met in terms of teaching religious education to Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students. The Shires follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

9. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development within the curriculum

The Shires caters for students who have autism and the associated social difficulties that arise from this condition. The curriculum is designed to promote the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through planned activities and also through opportunities that arise incidentally throughout the day. SMSC development will take place across all curriculum areas, within activities that encourage students to recognise the spiritual dimension of their learning, reflect on the significance of what they are learning, and to recognise any challenges that there may be to their own attitude and lifestyle. The PSHE education programme supports the students' moral, social and cultural development and is used extensively as a basis for the promotion of these aspects. The curriculum aims to promote:-

- ❖ mutual respect and tolerance
- ❖ individual liberty
- ❖ the rule of law
- ❖ understanding of British values and principles
- ❖ understanding of The Shires' values and principles
- ❖ opportunity for students to consider their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- ❖ opportunity for students to reflect upon and discuss their beliefs, feelings and responses to personal experience
- ❖ an understanding of the students' individual and group identity
- ❖ understanding of the diverse multi-cultural society in which the students live
- ❖ a strong sense of morality

The Shires aims to provide a range of opportunities for students to experience the wider society in which they live. Visitors are regularly welcomed into the school, and the Lord Lieutenant of Rutland and the High Sheriff do much to bring the traditions and cultures of Great Britain to life. The Shires works within the local community carrying out tasks such as litter picking, bulb planting and hanging bird feeders in winter. Students are encouraged to engage with the wider society through going out to restaurants and cafes, but staff need to ensure that the students' presence in these places does not impact adversely on others. (Rights and Responsibilities Policy)

10. Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education within the curriculum

PSHE education is an important part of The Shires' curriculum. Planned activities are designed to support students in their understanding of some of the difficult personal, social, health and economic-related issues that arise in their lives and in the wider society in which they live. PSHE education underpins the values and beliefs of The Shires and relates closely to its mission statement. PSHE education provides learning that makes an essential contribution to:-

- ❖ reducing or removing barriers to learning by providing an education that promotes positive relationships and supports students in reaching their full potential
- ❖ developing key concepts, language skills, strategies and understanding to enable students to make positive lifestyle choices now and in their future
- ❖ developing the key concepts and skills that both support and transcend academic learning and are essential to employability, within a rapidly changing global economy

The Shires provides opportunities for children and students to make real decisions about their lives, to take part in activities that simulate adult choices and where they can demonstrate their ability to take responsibility for their decisions.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is a strong element within the PSHE education curriculum provided by The Shires. Students are treated equally irrespective of gender, culture, ability or aptitude. Teaching strategies take into account the ability, age, readiness and cultural backgrounds of the students to ensure that all can access the full PSHE education provision. Students are expected to show respect and tolerance for others and to learn how to live harmoniously with those who do not necessarily share their ideas and views.

Some of the key principles underpinning PSHE education in The Shires are that:-

- ❖ students bring with them prior learning and experiences
- ❖ each student has very individual needs
- ❖ students with autism have difficulty reading social situations
- ❖ PSHE education takes place within a safe and secure learning environment where students are not afraid to offer their own opinions
- ❖ teachers differentiate learning so that every student can access the PSHE education curriculum as his/her own level
- ❖ PSHE education is taught through planned and incidental opportunities
- ❖ staff and students share responsibility to ensure that PSHE education is a positive experience for all students

- ❖ information is accurate and accessible to every student

11. Roles and responsibilities

The Principal will ensure that:-

- ❖ the curriculum meets all legal and statutory requirements
- ❖ all statutory elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual students will be met
- ❖ the amount of time provided for teaching the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed annually
- ❖ where appropriate, the individual needs of some students are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from the national curriculum
- ❖ the procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements and students and their parents/carers receive information to show how much progress the students are making and what is required to help them improve
- ❖ the curriculum prepares students for their chosen career pathway
- ❖ Acorn Care and Education is fully involved in decision making processes relating to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- ❖ Acorn Care and Education is advised on progress towards targets in order to make informed decisions

Acorn Care and Education will ensure that:-

- ❖ it considers the advice of the Principal when approving this curriculum policy and when setting statutory and non-statutory targets
- ❖ progress towards annual statutory targets is monitored
- ❖ it contributes to decision making about the curriculum

The Teaching Manager will ensure that:-

- ❖ he/she has a good oversight of curriculum structure and delivery within the school
- ❖ detailed and up-to-date schemes of learning are in place for the delivery of courses
- ❖ schemes of learning are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis
- ❖ levels of attainment and rates of progression are discussed with teachers on a regular basis and that actions are taken where necessary to improve these
- ❖ the teaching staff maintain accurately graded portfolios of students' work
- ❖ the daily planning of teaching staff is of a consistently high standard
- ❖ activities are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students

Teaching staff and learning support staff will:-

- ❖ ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy
- ❖ keep up to date with developments in the National Curriculum
- ❖ have access to, and be able to interpret, data on each student to inform the

- ❖ design of the curriculum in order that it best meets the needs of each group of students
- ❖ share and exchange information about best practice amongst their colleagues in different schools and through external networks, resulting in a dynamic and relevant curriculum
- ❖ participate in high quality professional development, working with other teachers to develop their skills in understanding the learning needs of their students and how best to address those needs and engage them
- ❖ work in partnership with other agencies to provide an appropriate range of curriculum opportunities
- ❖ actively support students in their progress through the new curriculum

Students will:-

- ❖ be treated as partners in their learning, contributing to the design of the curriculum
- ❖ have their individual needs addressed, both within the school and extending beyond the classroom into the family and community through a curriculum which offers breadth, support and challenge
- ❖ be given additional support if they start to fall behind in their learning, helping them get back on track quickly
- ❖ receive coordinated support to enable them to make the appropriate curriculum choices

Parents and carers will:-

- ❖ be consulted about their children's learning and in planning their future education
- ❖ be confident that their child is receiving a high quality education that is designed to meet their learning needs and which will equip them with the skills they need to thrive throughout their lives
- ❖ be informed about the curriculum on offer and understand the rationale behind it

12. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Acorn Care and Education will receive an annual report from the Principal on:-

- ❖ the standards reached in each subject compared with appropriate benchmarks.
- ❖ the standards achieved at the end of each key stage taking into account any important variations between groups of students, subjects, courses and trends over time, compared with appropriate benchmarks
- ❖ the number of students for whom the curriculum was disapplied and the arrangements which were made

Acorn Care and Education will review this policy at least once a year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.