



Curriculum Policy

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Contents

- 1. Rationale**
- 2. Legislation**
- 3. Policy Statement**
- 4. Curriculum Aims**
- 5. Curriculum Outcomes**
- 6. The curriculum for KS3 students**
- 7. The curriculum for KS4 and post 16 students**
- 8. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
- 9. PSHE Education**
- 10. Roles and responsibilities**
- 11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

1. Rationale

At The Shires, all our young people have a diagnosis of autism and many have significant learning difficulties and the potential to present with behaviours that challenge. We believe that with the right support, encouragement and a flexible approach to their learning, they will all be able to experience achievement and success at whatever level is appropriate for them. We also believe that our students have a right to independent guidance regarding their futures, and the right to enjoy life, be integrated into their local communities and be valued for who they are, and to develop their independence and self-confidence, to be respected and encouraged to respect others.

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.

2. Legislation

We undertake to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of each pupil based on the terms of their Education, Health and Care Plan. All pupils receive full-time supervised education, in which they experience a curriculum that includes a range of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative aspects appropriate to their age, aptitude and stage of development. The overriding aim of the curriculum is to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils in terms of individual learning, independence, personal growth and development.

3. Policy Statement

The care of our students is at the heart of the school ethos - 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 current world. The vision for our School's curriculum is to provide a broad, rich and balanced education, based on the realities of modern life. We recognise that:-

- the pace of change in the world around us is increasing and the need for flexibility is paramount
- young people have, and will increasingly have, greater access to information and learning materials independently and outside of school
- adulthood requires economic participation - students must be adequately prepared for this within their abilities to do so
- 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, which could include support staff, graduates, artists, sports people and people from industry, business and the local community.

4. Curriculum Aims

To provide a broad, rich and balanced curriculum that is adapted to every young person's needs, with a focus on independence and enjoyment of life.

To deliver activities that provide suitable learning challenges, giving every pupil the opportunity to experience success and achieve as much as possible.

To develop their social and communication skills to the best of their ability, using a variety of methods.

To be challenged and stretched to achieve their potential.

To help young people to develop an awareness of their own spiritual development, understand right from wrong and have an appreciation of British values, and the opportunity to practice any religious beliefs they have.

For every young person to be celebrated for who they are.

To develop feelings of self-esteem and confidence, self-respect and respect for others.

To develop independent learners who can move forward with confidence, to the next stage of their lives.

5. Curriculum Outcomes

To lead to qualifications that prepare students for work or further education or independent living

To enable students to fulfil their potential meet the needs of students of all abilities

To provide equal access for all students to a full range of learning experiences beyond statutory guidelines

To prepare students to make informed and appropriate choices at points of transition

To help students develop lively, enquiring minds, an ability to question and argue rationally and an ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills.

To include a range of vital characteristics including breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression, continuity and coherence

To ensure continuity and progression within the school and between phases of education, increasing students' choice during their school career

To foster learning approaches which meet the differing needs of our young people

To help students to use language and number effectively

To help students develop personal moral values, respect for religious values and tolerance of other races' beliefs and ways of life

To help students understand the world in which they live and the part they play

To strive to meet the social, emotional, behavioural and communication needs of our students

6. The curriculum for KS3 students

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

- 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, enterprise and employability skills and volunteering)
-

And includes skills such as:-

- communication
- using and applying number
- information and communication technology
- working with others
- improving own learning and performance
- problem solving including social problem solving
- specific and explicit social skills teaching

7. The curriculum for KS4 and post 16 students

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 and relationships 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 still provide part of the core curriculum for many of our KS4 students.

At The Shires, we are currently developing our vocational curriculum, to better meet the needs of our young people, and provide a breadth to their learning which will be matched to their interests and aspirations for their futures. We also work with local college wherever possible, to widen the curriculum even more, by enabling our young people to access courses and facilities that we may not always be able to offer, whilst at the same time, to further develop their self-confidence and independence.

8. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The curriculum is designed to promote 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 young people to recognise the spiritual dimension of their learning, and where possible, to 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 and the rule of law
- understanding of British values and principles
- understanding of the core values and principles of school
- 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

As part of our curriculum we aim to provide a range of opportunities for students to experience the wider society in which they live, including development of independent living skills. Students are regularly encouraged to engage with their wider community in a variety of ways, working towards making a personal contribution as active community members.

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

PSHE education is an important part of our 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 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

We provide opportunities for young people 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. 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 are that:-

- students bring with them prior learning and experiences
- every student's unique needs are considered
- 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 at 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 accessible to every student

10. Roles and responsibilities

The Principal/Head Teacher will ensure:-

- 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

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

Young people will:-

- 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, empowering them to communicate their own curriculum choices

11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Acorn Care and Education will receive an annual report from the Head teacher 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.

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