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Curriculum Policy Vincent House School

Policy Reference:	VHS4.
Version Number:	1.2
Applies to:	Vincent House School – all practitioners
Associated documents:	Assessment policy Independent schools standards Literacy policy Marking and feedback policy
Approved by:	Headteacher – Rob Walton
Implementation date:	November 2024
Next review due by:	November 2025
<i>This policy has been reviewed to ensure it promotes safeguarding and does not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups</i>	

0. Summary of changes since previous version of policy

Adaptations to version 1 06.05.24:

- Changing PSHCE to PfA (PSHCE, RSE and Careers)
- Additional detail re: enrichment
- Adaptation of subject grid
- Changes to roles to reflect current, not future, staffing structure

1. Aims

This policy aims to provide an overview of the school's curriculum including its intent, implementation and impact. The policy identifies the underlying ethos of the curriculum and how it is specifically adapted for the students at Vincent House School. It addresses the balance between the academic and vocational elements of the curriculum as well as the Personal Development and enrichment areas of the curriculum. The policy explains the significance of integrated therapy and the holistic approach that all staff are expected to use. The policy focuses upon the intent and rationale for the curriculum, giving an overall structure to how it is organised but acknowledges the need for flexibility and innovation throughout the academic year in order to meet the needs of students.

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice/legislation:

This section should list any relevant legislation or official guidance that the policy addresses

- Education act 1996
- Independent School standards

3. Scope

This policy applies to all who support students at Aurora Vincent House School as well as all stakeholders who have a vested interest in education of students at the school.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Curriculum policy is integral to the vision and values of the school and therefore must be read and understood by all staff who within their role will support its implementation as appropriate.

4.1 The Headteacher will:

4.1.1 Continually engage with all stakeholders to understand the needs of all students and provide a shared vision for the curriculum to support.

4.1.2 Quality assure the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum ensuring alignment with the vision of the school.

4.1.3 Liaise closely with the Curriculum Lead, SENCO, Clinical team and student voice to ensure the curriculum is appropriate to individuals and aspirational.

4.1.4 Ensure compliance with Independent School Standards.

4.2 The Deputy Head will:

4.2.1 With the support of the SLT, will provide a curriculum offer that is reviewed annually but will also work with the SLT to identify any requirement to change the curriculum at any time during the academic year, lead on its implementation and update the policy accordingly.

4.2.2 Will map out appropriate learning pathways for different abilities and needs based on achievable resourcing.

4.2.3 Will consider the academic curriculum within holistic aims ensuring balance and engagement for the student and reflecting the variety of needs required to prepare for adulthood.

4.2.4 Will manage the timetable for all year groups supporting an appropriate broad and balanced adapted National Curriculum based on the holistic needs for the students.

4.3 The Deputy Head and SENCO will:

4.3.1 Ensure that all students can access their curriculum.

4.3.2 That the EHCP and the curriculum that individuals follow are aligned and with the best interests of the student in mind.

4.4 The Clinical Psychologist lead will:

4.4.1 Work with relevant staff to identify to the Curriculum Lead any adaptations to the curriculum that will support further engagement and / or regulation with the curriculum.

4.4.2 Collaborate with the Curriculum lead in the design of the curriculum to embed and develop the embedded, therapeutic approach to education.

4.5 Subject leads will:

4.5.1 Base the intent and implementation of their subject(s) congruent within the expectations of the curriculum policy and aligned with the vision communicated by the Headteacher and Curriculum lead.

4.5.2 Continue to ensure they are updated with policy and best practice related to their subject(s) including collaboration with other provisions both inside and out of Aurora.

4.5.3 Be responsible for quality assuring the teaching of their subject(s) across the school.

4.6 The Deputy Headteacher and Careers leader will:

4.6.1 Work with the SLT to ensure the curriculum offer appropriately supports the Gatsby Benchmarks and arranges a calendar of events to support career guidance.

4.7 Students, Parents/Carers and other stakeholders will:

4.7.1 Have multiple opportunities to input feedback on the curriculum. These include curriculum workshops, surveys, and the annual reviews of EHCPs.

5. Definitions

ADHD: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

ARFID: Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder

ASC: Autism Spectrum Condition

EHCP: Education, Health and Care Plan

IEP: Individual Education Plan

OCD: Obsessive compulsive disorder

PACE: Playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy

PFA: Preparation for adulthood

PSHCE: Personal, social, health and economic education with Citizenship

RSHE: Relationships, sex and health education

SEMH: social, emotional and mental health

SLT: Senior Leadership Team led by the Headteacher

SMSC: spiritual, moral, social and cultural

Thrive®: an approach to support healthy, social, emotional and cognitive development

6. Curriculum intent

Vincent House School will provide the best opportunities for students to thrive both now and in the future.

Students at Vincent House are those children and young people with an EHCP who would not effectively manage a mainstream education. Vincent House School supports predominantly neurodivergent students. The students' needs include Autism Spectrum Condition with associated social and communication difficulties, ADHD and SEMH (focused on high anxiety). Some students may struggle with eating disorders including ARFID, OCD, gender dysphoria and body dysmorphia as well as other mental health conditions. The intent of the curriculum at Vincent House School recognises the importance of seeing each student holistically and as an individual. Therefore the curriculum intends to deliver educational outcomes appropriate for the student whilst sensitive to their needs and supporting their personal development and their mental health. Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the students is integral to the intent of the curriculum. The curriculum aims to engage all students, fostering a positive approach to life-long learning, and to prepare them for their next step which they can approach with added confidence and resilience.

6.1 Neuro-informed and affirmative

The curriculum celebrates each student's uniqueness - acknowledging every person is worthy and valuable. The teaching within the curriculum should not impose neurotypical expectations; it will support students on how to navigate the world safely from their perspective. Many students have special interests that they focus upon and these can be used to support engagement in school and regulation whilst ensuring a balance remains in their learning and is not detrimental to their development. The curriculum and its delivery is neuro-informed based on understanding lived experience and evidence based in the latest research.

6.2 Ambitious and relevant

6.2.1 All stakeholders should be aspirational for each student regardless of their learning profile. We are committed to providing the best outcomes possible and understand that these must be relevant to each child. For example, whilst high academic attainment should be celebrated, it will lack relevance if that student cannot access any type of work or to live with any independence. Therefore we are aspirational for our academic and vocational outcomes and equally aspirational in our preparation for adulthood, careers and wellbeing curriculums.

6.2.2 A child/young person centred approach to target outcomes is used so that they are aspirational and relevant. This is achieved through effective transition procedures, EHCP annual reviews, consultation with clinicians, school reports and ongoing formal and informal communications. The structure and delivery of the curriculum may change as a student progresses through the school in order to adapt to their specific needs.

6.2.3 Student voice is integral to the development and implementation of the curriculum which is bespoke to each student and each cohort. All new students along with their parents/carers are invited to complete surveys on the curriculum so that we understand what their future aspirations are as well as their views on all areas of the curriculum.

6.2.4 The EHCP provides the basis for an IEP for each student which ensures a bespoke curriculum that is aspirational, relevant and regularly reviewed to promote fulfilling their potential.

6.2.5 Some subjects may not be part of the curriculum offer at Vincent House School due to the facilities available or the appropriateness of a subject for the cohort and the interest shown by students. When possible, school clubs may be implemented to support students' interests in certain subjects.

6.3 Broad and balanced curriculum

The curriculum should provide a broad and balanced curriculum whilst ensuring students are not negatively impacted. The curriculum is made up of 6 main areas:

Core & Foundation subjects: structured and sequential learning in discrete subjects that will lead to opportunities to attain recognised qualifications based on an adapted National Curriculum.

Enrichment curriculum: supports the personal development of the students by providing a wide range of experiences outside of the classroom and has activities that promotes emotional regulation, health and wellbeing. It is integral to providing cultural capital within the curriculum.

Specific therapeutic interventions: led by the onsite clinical team and EHCP informed.

Preparation for adulthood: a bespoke curriculum to support independent living skills, incorporating the Wheel of independence™ framework.

Careers: The curriculum lead ensures access to the school for education and training partners from years 8-13. In KS4 Careers guidance is delivered through the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. Work experienced is carefully organised with an understanding of the needs of our students.

Themes and approaches within the curriculum: these support the breadth of the curriculum with cross-curricular opportunities to support learning (see 8.Themes and approaches within the curriculum).

6.4 Creative and flexible

The curriculum is to be creative and flexible by ensuring all 6 areas support both the strengths and needs of the students. It begins with having a full understanding of the students and establishing an accurate baseline (please refer to our Assessment policy). This recognises the gaps and the barriers in their learning. To support a range of learning profiles and to ensure relevance, the curriculum will be creative in its range of learning opportunities and embrace innovation. The teaching staff are expected to work collaboratively with external provisions and agencies to provide outstanding outcomes. They must be able to quickly adapt their teaching and the curriculum.

7. Curriculum implementation

The curriculum is implemented through a structured timetable that includes discreet subject teaching, education & therapeutic interventions, and a highly flexible enrichment timetable that covers a wide range of activities. The curriculum is planned to ensure sequential learning whilst recognising the individuality of our students' learning profiles.

7.1 Subjects followed

Subjects followed across all Key stages plus additional subjects available are shown below:

KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4	KS5
English	English	English	English	English
Reading / phonics programme	Reading / phonics programme	Maths	Maths	Maths
Maths	Maths	Science	Science	PfA (PSHCE, RSE, Careers)
Science	Science	PfA (PSHCE, RSE, Careers)	PfA (PSHCE, RSE, Careers)	Enrichment
Humanities	Humanities	Humanities	Enrichment	<u>*Optional subjects</u> Art AQA Unit awards Computing English literature Food Technology History Geography
Art & Design	Art & Design	Computing	Physical Education	
Physical Education	Physical Education	Enrichment	<u>*Optional subjects</u> Art AQA Unit awards Computing English literature Food Technology History Geography The Project Qualification Psychology	
Computing	Computing	Art	<u>**Potential additional</u> Biology	

PSHCE/ Relationship Education	PSHE/ Relationship Education	Food technology	Chemistry GCSE BSL Music Physical Education	
Food technology	Food technology	Physical Education		
Music	Music	Religious Education		
Religious Education	Religious Education	Enrichment		
Enrichment	Enrichment			

*Optional subjects are those that can be chosen in addition to the core offer.

**Potential subjects are those that may be implemented and this is not an exhaustive list.

A reading and phonics programme is available across all key stages and reading for a range of purposes is promoted. In both tutor times and the Individual learning session there are opportunities to read independently and for shared reading. When possible, staff will supply reading materials related to students' special interest. Please refer to the Literacy policy for further details.

There are core subjects delivered at key stages 4 and 5 plus additional subjects that may be chosen to study as appropriate. Optional subjects offered can be changed based upon the needs of the students if operationally possible. A variety of qualifications are offered within the core subjects including Entry level, Functional skills, AQA Unit awards and GCSEs.

7.2 Management of the timetable

Students may join the school at any year group and at any point during the year. The priority is to manage an effective transition in to school and avoid overwhelming them. Those students and others may require a greater amount of time on enrichment activities that support emotional regulation and engagement.

There are a range of interventions that are both academic and therapeutic that will take place throughout the day. Clinical and education teams work together to minimise any possible detrimental impact on the curriculum. The school timetable provides daily sessions for individually targeted literacy, numeracy or EHCP objectives to be worked upon as well as time to address any lessons missed as a result of interventions occurring elsewhere in the timetable.

Transitions are minimised in the school to support sensory needs, emotional regulation and pastoral care. Students will mostly only move from their tutor classroom for the specialist lessons of Food technology, Science, PE and enrichment activities.

7.3 School day organisation

Time	Activity	Further detail
0840-0850	Arrival & Registration	Registration is at 0850 in tutor room
0850-0900	Tutor time	Prepares students for the day
0900-0920	Personalised learning	Interventions with class team & clinical. Follows IEP – with focus on literacy and numeracy and opportunities to regulate
0920-1005	Lesson 1	
1005-1020	Morning break	

1020-1105	Lesson 2	
1105-1150	Lesson 3	
1150-1240	Lunch / Lesson 4	Lower school lunch & clubs / Upper school L4
1240-1330	Lesson 4 / Lunch	Upper school lunch & clubs / Lower school L4
1330-1415	Lesson 5	
1415-1500	Lesson 6	
1500-1520	Tutor time	

7.4 Key stage 5

Students are supported and encouraged to find appropriate destinations at the end of Key stage 4. For some students, it may be appropriate for them to continue at Vincent House School in to Key Stage 5 to complete the courses that are offered in Key Stage 4.

7.4 Enrichment curriculum

The enrichment curriculum is extensive and is flexible based on the needs of the individuals and may complement or extend activities in other subjects. *Specific sessions are timetabled to enable all students to participate, but further enrichment sessions will be organised as required by individual plans, EHCPs and Clinical Team advice.* The enrichment curriculum is delivered in the following ways:

- Involvement with community projects
- Outdoor and adventurous activities
- Sports and leisure activities both at school and in the community
- Forest School education
- Music, art and drama activities and experiences in school and at external venues
- Visits to a range of locations locally and further afield
- Community involvement in special events
- Recreational swimming (separate to PE)

Additionally the school promotes the opportunity for students as appropriate to attend residential events that support both enrichment and PFA.

7.6 Individual learning session

Following tutor time, students are directed within their tutor group to learning based on their IEP which can vary each day and may include:

- Literacy and numeracy interventions
- Special interest projects
- Supported catch-up work where they have missed key lessons as a result of other interventions
- Additionally required activities to assist regulation
- Specific interventions from the clinical team
- Activities recommended by a Thrive® practitioner

This session provides additional flexibility in the curriculum that increases personalised learning and allows for increased independence and student led learning.

8. Themes and approaches within the curriculum

Throughout the curriculum there are a range of themes and approaches that permeate the curriculum reflecting the ethos of the school.

8.1 SMSC

SMSC is a thread throughout the curriculum and permeates every aspect of the school day which is not only taught but modelled by staff. This includes the promotion of British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. Students are encouraged to be curious rather than judgemental.

8.2 THRIVE®

Vincent House School has adopted the Thrive approach® to supporting students with their social and emotional needs and healthy cognitive growth through a developmental and trauma-sensitive approach. This underpins the holistic curriculum that supports the needs of our students. We believe in the importance of student-staff relationships and lived-experience shows us of the importance of PACE and the Thrive approach® to working with the students. Whilst the content of lessons is important, our relationships with the students determine the effectiveness of the lessons.

8.3 Wheel of independence™

For students in year 9 and above, The Wheel of Independence™ Framework is used to support the tracking of progress and to measure outcomes for independence and functional life skills. The 8 life skill areas of Meal preparation, Time management, Leisure, Self-care, House-keeping, Laundry, Food shopping, and Money skills, will be supported across the curriculum but will have identified time in PFA for activities based on individual needs.

8.4 Curriculum vocabulary

The terminology used in all subjects is reviewed regularly from an educational and therapeutic perspective, ensuring accuracy and appropriateness. Vocabulary and phrasing that could be detrimental in respect to ARFID should be identified and addressed within the curriculum. Staff should promote the use of vocabulary and phrasing that is neuro-informed and affirmative. Please refer to the Literacy Policy in reference to the teaching strategies for learning new vocabulary.

8.5 Literacy and numeracy

Staff will utilise opportunities in any learning across all subjects to extend students' skills in both literacy and numeracy, including using them in a functional way that assists PFA. There are daily sessions (Individual learning session) to enable students to work on personal targets in Literacy and numeracy.

8.6 Parental/carer support

We offer regular workshops and opportunities for parents/carers to learn how to support their child within the curriculum, especially in literacy and numeracy. In conjunction with the clinical team, advice and ideas are given on how to support students' functional skills at home. Homework is not given to students. If homework is requested by both student and parent/carer then that may be arranged as appropriate. Certain KS4/5 qualifications may require home study.

9. Integrated therapy

Education and therapy teams work within a transdisciplinary model to ensure that therapy is integrated in to the curriculum and school routines.

9.1 Subject planning and delivery

Therapists review the subjects within the curriculum with teaching teams to improve how subjects may be delivered based on the needs of the individuals/cohort. Along with Tutor teams, safeguarding team and Thrive practitioners, they will also identify potential specific topics that require a different delivery, particularly in PSHCE. Teaching teams may require direction to avoid a subject that may trigger dysregulation or serious impact on mental health.

9.2 Tutor teams

Students' curriculum may include both sensory diets and a range of activities to support their emotional regulation and wellbeing throughout the day. This is integrated into the curriculum and both students and all staff are empowered to understand and utilise these activities.

9.3 IEPs

All staff working with students receive significant training from both internal and external therapists so that they can effectively support all students with a universal offer of therapeutic support. Staff support students constantly throughout the day to achieve their individual targets and this practice is monitored by the SENCO and the therapy team. Thrive® practitioners will also work with the clinical team and SENCO to devise action plans to support each learner.

10. Artificial intelligence (AI)

Vincent House School recognises both the uses and potential misuses of AI in students' work. The teaching team aim to always innovate and therefore will proactively consider how curriculum subjects and studying can be enhanced by AI for the benefit of the students whilst identifying and mitigating any potential negative outcomes. The vulnerability and conditions of our students mean that both the positives and negatives of using this technology in their learning and preparation for adulthood may be greatly increased.

10. Assessment

Students are given a baseline assessment and Assessment for learning is continuous throughout the school in order to support their learning and inform future planning. This is especially important with students who may have missed significant learning. As many of the students present with high anxiety and EBSA, assessment is carefully integrated to the curriculum and safeguarding students' wellbeing is prioritised. Summative data is reported to stakeholders and used to inform curriculum decisions. Please see our Assessment policy for further information.

10. Impact

Vincent House School measures the impact of its curriculum against our aim:

We will provide the best possible opportunities for our students to thrive both now and in the future.

We determine impact through:

- Effective student transition into Vincent House School
- Student wellbeing and engagement
- EHCP progress in all areas
- Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy
- Achievement in recognised qualifications
- Preparing for adulthood outcomes including Wheel of Independence™ objectives
- Destinations on leaving school
- Outcomes in adulthood

We are committed to staying in contact with our alumni to assess the long-term outcomes of our curriculum to ensure our practice is reflective and evidence based thus informing changes to our curriculum through lived experience. This aids our vision to ensure we have a curriculum that not only supports their next step but has built resilience for the challenges they will face later in adulthood.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Curriculum lead in consultation with the SLT who will also utilise input from all stakeholders.