

Curriculum Policy

Aurora Summerfields School

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Applies to:	Aurora Summerfields School
Associated documents:	Independent School Standards doc Marking and Feedback Policy Assessment Policy
Approved by:	Head of School
Implementation date:	July 2026
Next review due by:	July 2027
<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

- Updated Curriculum Intent and Implementation.
- Music now embedded across the curriculum.
- Addition of reference to the Thrive approach.
- Addition of information about residential.
- Some changes to the KS4 Curriculum offer.

1. Aims

Aurora Summerfields School recognises that all students should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. All students need to work at a level that is appropriate to their understanding, age, stage of development and prior attainment, and at a pace that suits their individual abilities. Learning and teaching are approached with a strong focus on the individual needs of learners. Each student has clearly identified next steps in their curriculum based on their baseline assessment, previous academic outcomes, and long-term learning targets. These next steps are detailed on an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Students are taught in small classes, in small groups, individually and within the community so that skills are generalised to real-life settings and pupils are prepared for adulthood, further education, employment and life in modern Britain. High aspirations are held for all pupils, with leaders and staff ensuring barriers to learning are identified and reduced so that all pupils achieve and thrive.

Our curriculum is designed to build the practical, everyday skills identified through a clinical assessment tool (Vineland) into the wider curriculum so that they are integral to what we deliver every day, whilst also empowering parents and carers to reinforce these skills within the home environment. This sits alongside high-quality learning experiences based on a broad and balanced curriculum. We prioritise securing strong foundations in communication and language, reading, writing and mathematics so that all pupils can access the wider curriculum successfully. Literacy, numeracy and communication are embedded across subjects to support lifelong learning and employability. Assessment is used effectively to inform teaching and help pupils embed knowledge over time.

Our curriculum is designed to broaden pupils' horizons, extend their cultural capital, and empower them to be curious about the world around them. It promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring that pupils develop respect, tolerance and the knowledge they need to participate positively in a multicultural society. Through personalised support and a nurturing approach, our students will become compassionate, independent learners who are well prepared for the demands and opportunities of the 21st century. We measure the impact of our curriculum through academic progress, personal and social development, and readiness for pupils' next stage of education, training or employment.

Our curriculum Intent is:

- To ensure each young person leaves us with secure foundational skills in literacy, numeracy and communication, achieving recognised qualifications in English, Maths and a suite of wider accreditations that are ambitious, relevant and prepare them for further education, training, employment and independent adult life, with a clear and positive destination for their next step.
- To develop every young person's social, emotional and personal growth, resilience and independence, so they are able to have the confidence, cultural capital and skills to adapt, make informed choices, engage successfully with others, contribute positively to their community and thrive in the wider world.

To do this we will ensure that:

- all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that is ambitious, coherently planned and sequenced to build knowledge and skills over time.
- all students have an equal right to access high-quality teaching across all areas of the curriculum which is evidence-informed, responsive to pupils' needs and supports them to make sustained progress from their starting points.
- we promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils, including developing their cultural capital and curiosity about the wider world.
- we encourage personal development, so that all pupils are well prepared to respect others, contribute positively to wider society and participate successfully in modern Britain.
- we 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, embedding these within the curriculum and wider school life.
- we support all pupils in developing healthy lifestyles and positive relationships, equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to make safe, informed choices.
- we provide opportunities and experiences that develop pupils' communication skills, ensuring literacy, numeracy and oracy are embedded across the curriculum.
- we ensure the teaching and learning of functional skills, knowledge and understanding, including access to vocational and practical pathways in KS4/5 that prepare pupils for employment, training or further study.
- we ensure all pupils have meaningful pathways towards their next destination, and that they have personalised guidance, opportunities to explore options, and genuine involvement in decision-making about their futures

Curriculum Overview	Key Stage 1 & 2	Key Stage 3
Core subjects		
English	✓	✓
Maths	✓	✓
Science	✓	✓
PSHE	✓	✓
Vineland skills	✓	✓
Foundation subjects		
Art and Design	✓	✓
Design Technology	✓	✓
History	✓	✓
Geography	✓	✓
RE	✓	✓
Computing	✓	✓
PE	✓	✓

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Food technology	✓	✓
Citizenship		✓
Social education	✓	✓
Careers		✓
Music	Embedded within the wider curriculum	

Key Stage 4 Qualification plan

Aurora Summerfields Pathways	Curriculum For All									External Work Experience Placement	Likely Destination
Core Curriculum	Mindworks		ASDAN Travel training & Vineland		PE		ASDAN Life Skills		SaLT	Internal Work Experience	
Pathway 1	Academic Qualifications			Technical Skills Qualifications						External Work Experience Placement	Pathway 1
	AQA Maths Entry Level 1, 2 & 3	Pearson English Entry Level 1, 2 & 3	AQA Science Entry level 1, 2 & 3 Double Award	BTEC Home Cooking Level 1 or 2	Open Awards Digital Skills – Entry Level 3	AQA Art and Design	ASDAN Employability Certificate	PSHE Pearson BTEC Personal growth and wellbeing	Level 1 or Level 2 BTEC Introduction to Vocational Skills		Apprenticeship
	GCSE Maths	GCSE English	AQA GCSE Biology			GCSE					Entry College Course
Pathway 2	Academic Qualifications			Technical skills Qualifications						Internal Work Experience	Pathway 2
	Pearson Functional Skills Maths Level 1&2	Pearson Functional Skills English Level 1&2	Science AQA Entry level 1-3 Single Award	BTEC Home Cooking Level 1	Open Awards Digital Skills – Entry Level 3 tbc	AQA Art and Design GCSE	ASDAN Employability Award	PSHE Pearson BTEC Personal growth and wellbeing	Level 1 BTEC Introduction to Vocational Skills		Entry College Course
				CIEH Food Safety							Specialist College
										Supported Internship	

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy takes into account the requirements of the Independent School Standards.

3. Context

Pupils at Aurora Summerfields School have a range of needs including Autism Spectrum Conditions, ADHD, social and communication difficulties, high anxiety and sensory processing differences. Many pupils also present with additional needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. In most cases, these needs occur in complex combinations, and most pupils have experienced previous educational placements that have broken down. As a result, many arrive with low self-esteem, fragile confidence, a reluctance to trust and a fear of challenge. This means that teachers must be highly creative, tailoring approaches to each young person in order to build resilience, confidence and a positive attitude to learning.

At Aurora Summerfields School, we utilise the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales-3 (VABS-3) to inform and underpin our curriculum design and delivery. VABS-3 is a standardised clinical assessment tool with a strong evidence base and proven reliability and validity. It measures adaptive skills — the practical, everyday skills needed to function in the wider environment, including communication, daily living skills and socialisation. These skills are often under-developed in young people with Autism Spectrum Conditions and related needs, and are essential for pupils to thrive beyond school.

Alongside this, we implement the Thrive programme, which focuses on pupils' emotional well-being and social development. Thrive enables staff to identify gaps in emotional development and provide targeted strategies to support self-regulation, resilience and positive relationships.

By integrating the VABS-3 framework with the Thrive approach, our curriculum ensures that pupils are supported holistically: academically, socially and emotionally. This dual focus not only promotes progress in learning but also equips pupils with the life skills and confidence they need to become more independent, resilient and well-prepared for adulthood.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Leadership Team will:

4.1.1 Ensure that the curriculum policy is adhered to.

4.1.2 Ensure that staff have adequate skills, knowledge, and training to deliver the curriculum.

4.2 Staff will:

4.2.1 Deliver the curriculum in line with this policy, seeking advice and support where required.

5. Definitions

N/A

6. Curriculum

In Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, pupils follow programmes of study which deliver the skills and knowledge identified in the National Curriculum. The curriculum embraces all areas of academic learning at a level that reflects individual educational needs and provides suitable challenge. Our pupils usually enter school working significantly below age-related expectations, with very significant gaps in literacy, numeracy and communication. Many have missed significant periods of schooling and join us having been out of education for an extended time. Up to KS3 we use a primary-based curriculum framework because it provides the sequential building blocks students need. However, content is adapted to be age-appropriate and is designed to prepare pupils for KS4 and adulthood.

Curriculum delivery of Science, Geography, History, Art & Design, Design Technology and RE in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is supported through the use of Curriculum Maestro (Cornerstones Education). Curriculum Maestro provides a structured and progressive framework which enables learning to be coherently planned across foundation subjects while maintaining alignment with the National Curriculum. Topics are carefully sequenced to make meaningful links between subjects and promote pupils' curiosity, engagement and understanding of the wider world. Staff adapt planning appropriately to meet the individual needs, abilities and starting points of pupils, ensuring that learning remains accessible, ambitious and relevant.

In literacy across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) Power of Reading approach is utilised to support the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. High-quality and engaging texts are used as a stimulus for learning, enabling pupils to develop a love of reading while improving comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and written communication. The approach promotes purposeful writing opportunities, encourages discussion and critical thinking, and supports pupils in making meaningful connections across different areas of learning.

Pupils across all key stages are taught mathematics in attainment-based sets to ensure that teaching is closely matched to prior learning, knowledge, and understanding. Placement within sets is informed by assessment information, prior attainment, and ongoing teacher evaluation. Groupings are reviewed regularly and remain flexible and responsive to pupil progress. Movement between sets can occur at any point where assessment indicates a different level of challenge or support would better meet the pupil's needs.

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Our mathematics curriculum is underpinned by the White Rose Maths schemes of learning. These provide a coherent, small-step progression through mathematical concepts and full coverage of the National Curriculum. This structured approach ensures consistency across all classes and supports mastery-oriented teaching. The White Rose approach embeds the three key strands of mathematical learning:

- Fluency – secure recall and application of number facts and processes
- Reasoning – developing logical thinking and justifying solutions
- Problem-Solving – applying understanding in a range of contexts

Lessons are designed using the Concrete–Pictorial–Abstract (CPA) model, which ensures deep understanding by moving from physical manipulatives to visual representation and finally to abstract calculation.

This approach enables all pupils to access an ambitious mathematics curriculum while making sustained progress from their individual starting points.

At Summerfields School, Purple Mash is used as a key resource to support the delivery of the computing curriculum across KS1 – KS3. The platform provides engaging, age-appropriate tools and activities that enable pupils to develop their understanding of computer science, information technology and digital literacy in line with the National Curriculum. Through Purple Mash, pupils learn essential skills such as coding, creating digital content, handling and presenting data, online communication and staying safe online. Teachers use the platform to plan and deliver interactive lessons, assess pupils' progress and provide opportunities for independent learning. Purple Mash also supports cross-curricular learning by enabling pupils to apply computing skills in a range of subjects, fostering creativity, problem-solving, collaboration and responsible use of technology.

The curriculum embraces all areas of academic learning at a level that reflects individual educational needs and provides suitable challenge. Opportunities to develop pupils' personal, social and health awareness are explicitly embedded across all curriculum areas and informed by both the Vineland assessment tool and the Thrive programme, ensuring a consistent focus on academic progress, emotional development and adaptive life skills.

In Key Stage 4, studies support pupils to attain relevant qualifications so that they can progress confidently to the next stage of their education or chosen pathway. For many, this includes transition into further education at local colleges, supported through tailored guidance, careers education and strong partnerships with external providers. Where appropriate, pathways also prioritise preparation for employment, vocational training and the development of independence and life skills.

The curriculum is enriched by visits from outside speakers, educational visits, and community engagement opportunities. These experiences broaden horizons, extend cultural capital and allow pupils to apply learning in real-life contexts. Thrive supports this by equipping pupils with the confidence and social skills needed to access these opportunities positively.

Outdoor Education programmes provide adventurous activities that enable pupils to enjoy physical and social challenges in varied environments beyond the classroom. Activities such as working in the local allotment, rock climbing, swimming, fishing and gymnastics enable pupils to develop social skills, self-confidence, tolerance and teamwork, while promoting positive attitudes to health and fitness. Students also have the opportunity to take part in overnight residential experiences. These are highly valuable in helping pupils develop independence, resilience, problem-solving skills and the ability to live and work alongside others in new environments. Residentials provide rich opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they have learned in school to real-life contexts, while building memories, self-belief and stronger relationships with peers and staff.

Every pupil learns about healthy food choices and how to cook a range of meals through weekly food technology lessons. Where possible, food grown or harvested at the local allotment is used to link learning with practical life skills. At Key Stage 4, pupils can undertake a BTEC Level 1 or 2 Home Cooking qualification.

The school provides a comprehensive programme of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) which is based on the PSHE association SEN scheme of work. Pupils are encouraged and guided by moral principles and taught to recognise the value of family life. RSE explores and challenges stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, presenting sexuality in a positive and inclusive way. It equips pupils with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to feel confident in their own identity and to respect others'. RSE is delivered in a safe environment that encourages open discussion of both the positive and the potentially harmful aspects of sexual activity. The biological aspects of human reproduction are taught within the science curriculum. Parents retain the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the RSE programme other than those elements required by the Science National Curriculum. Given the high levels of vulnerability among our pupils, the RSE programme places strong emphasis on safeguarding, including annual age-appropriate teaching on consent, personal safety, and how to report concerns. Thrive is used to help pupils feel emotionally secure and supported when engaging with these sensitive topics. (See our RSE policy for further detail.)

SMSC and PSHE are central to our curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to respect the law, act consistently with their beliefs, and consider the consequences of their own and others' actions. We 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. Political issues are introduced through a range of subjects and always presented in a balanced manner. The teaching of partisan political views is not permitted.

6.1 Curriculum Transition

The school prides itself on providing effective and essential support for pupils as they move through the different stages of their education. Transitions are managed carefully and sensitively, with a strong focus on continuity, stability and preparing pupils for success at each new stage. This includes transition within the school, as well as progression into further education, employment or volunteering.

Detailed assessment and planning allow the full team of professionals to work together, ensuring support is cohesive, personalised and leads to the achievement of each individual's targets. Parents, carers and pupils are fully involved in the process, with advice, guidance and opportunities for discussion provided before any decisions are made about next steps.

As part of preparation for adulthood, pupils receive support in developing the practical skills needed for independence. This includes travel training, confidence in navigating new environments, and the ability to manage transitions into larger educational or workplace settings. Pupils also access community-based opportunities, including work experience, which help them apply their learning in real-life contexts and build the resilience, independence and confidence required for future success.

7. Support, Advice and Communication

For further advice or guidance related to this policy please contact the Head of School.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of School.