Curriculum Policy
Aurora Cedars School

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Applies to:	Aurora Cedars School
Associated documents:	Marking and Feedback Policy Assessment Policy
Approved by:	Head Teacher
Implementation date:	October 2026
Next review due by:	October 2027
This policy has been reviewed to ensure it promotes safeguarding and does not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups	

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0. Summary of changes since previous version of policy

Addition of AI information and use of AI for subjects and exams.
Changes to option subjects based on student voice.

1. Aims

Aurora Cedars School recognises that all pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. All pupils need to work at a level which is appropriate to their understanding, relevant to their chronological age and at a rate that suits their individual abilities. Learning and teaching is approached with the focus on the individual needs of the learners. Each pupil has a tailored curriculum based upon their baseline assessment, previous academic outcomes and long-term learning targets. Pupils will be taught in small groups, individually, and when appropriate within the community-so that skills are generalised to real life settings and pupils are prepared for life in the wider world. High aspirations are held for all pupils. Our curriculum develops pupils' experiences, knowledge, self-confidence, ability to communicate and independence.

Our curriculum is designed to build the practical, everyday skills including social, emotional, and mental wellbeing skills into the wider curriculum so they are integral to what we deliver every day, whilst also empowering parents/carers to reinforce these skills within the home environment. This sits alongside high-quality learning experiences based on a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our curriculum is designed to broaden our pupils' horizons, widen their cultural capital and empower them to be curious about the world around them. Through personalised support and a nurturing approach our pupils will become compassionate, independent learners who are well prepared for the demands of the 21st century in modern Britain.

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy takes into account the requirements of the Independent school standards.

3. Scope

Pupils at Aurora Cedars School have a range of needs including; Autism Spectrum Conditions, Social and Communication Difficulties, ADHD and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties. Most have a history of failed educational placements. The young people are characterised by a lack of self-esteem and confidence, a reluctance to trust and a fear of challenge. This means that teachers must be creative and tailor approaches to each young person to build resilience and confidence.

At Aurora Cedars School we are utilising the THRIVE approach in school to underpin the curriculum. THRIVE is a dynamic, developmental approach to working with children that supports their emotional and social wellbeing. It is based on the latest research in neuroscience, attachment theory and child development, drawing on research into the role of creativity and play in developing emotional resilience. The programme was created by a multi-agency team, with experience of being teachers, advisers, Ofsted inspectors, social workers, family therapists, foster and adoption specialists across education and care settings. They have drawn together their experience with theories and research to create this rich resource. THRIVE draws on an understanding of six "building blocks" of development and growth that comes online sequentially and remains throughout life.

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:

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

5. Definitions

N/A

6. Curriculum

Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact

"The curriculum is a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage (intent); for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative (implementation) and for evaluating what knowledge and understanding pupils have gained against expectations (impact)."

Our pupils may have a range of learning needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs and Communication Difficulties. All our pupils have an Education and Health Care Plan. Some pupils may have missed aspects of their education prior to attending Aurora Cedars School and so they often begin their education here with attainment levels and skills that are significantly below average for their age.

The aim and values of Aurora Cedars School are focused on maximising every individuals' potential to develop into a confident, secure, well-adjusted and skilled young person who will make a positive contribution to society and live as independent a life as possible.

Aurora Cedars School delivers an adapted curriculum, which is closely aligned with our pupils' levels of ability, interests and aspirations. It is broad, balanced, and relevant to needs and designed to have integrated clinical and therapeutic support as necessary and a focus on developing resilience and preparing pupils for the next stage in their lives. This specialist curriculum is tailored to our pupils' individual needs and based on a person-centred planning framework. Professionals, parents and the pupil will be pivotal in ensuring individual needs are met.

Learners can start at Aurora Cedars School during any time in their education, at any point in the year and are supported through an individualised transition programme. It is important that teachers use this transition time to assess and try and understand the extent of the learner's previous knowledge, skills and understanding both in the core subjects and in their specific subject area. Teachers at Aurora Cedars School have to be equipped with knowledge of the curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics as well as their own subject area due to the academic ability of some of the learners we teach. There are also times when lessons don't follow their planned route due to **incidental learning** which is equally important to explore. This could be due to gaps in learning or an interest that has been sparked in the individual learner/group, which through further exploration will strengthen the planned learning content. Due to learners often missing gaps in education, teachers planning won't always fully understand the learner's historic educational profile. At times, planned **sequencing** has to be paused to revisit previous content/skills which the learner is expected to have covered at an earlier stage of their educational career. Daily staff meetings/handovers are important to share knowledge of learner's social, emotional and academic learning. Through these meetings teachers can work closely to support **cross-curricular** planning and allow the learner to make more rapid progress.

Aurora Cedars benefits from the support from the clinical team to help enhance the social and emotional curriculum within our school, which compliments out THRIVE curriculum and approach. The clinical team support specific children, groups and phases dependent on the identified needs to include sessions such as drama workshops around friendships and conflict. Trauma informed group learning, such as The Meerkat Group and emotional resilience development. The clinical team support and run additional groups as identified during clinical TAC and SLT meetings. The sessions are delivered, evaluated and the impact recorded to develop the sessions and groups for future classes.

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Intent
Our curriculum is designed to give all of our pupils a broad and balanced education through coverage, experience and progression. We cater for a wide range of learners and endeavour to provide opportunities for all of our pupils to develop as independent, happy and confident learners in order to achieve their full potential and prepare them for their future lives. Alongside academic success we promote and encourage a nurturing side to learning that focuses on well-being and engagement linked to age and stage of development. Opportunities to work towards individual outcomes are embedded throughout.

As a School Community, we follow the Aurora Values and these are engrained in our daily practice:



At Aurora Cedars School, we have three curriculum intentions that act as drivers for what we deliver. These incorporate the Aurora Values and provide clarity and real life examples of how these values can have a lasting impact on themselves, others and the world around them.

Intention 1 – Develop our Sense of Self
Our curriculum will ensure that all pupils develop an understanding of themselves and the impact they have. To encourage ambition and drive to try new things and achieve their full potential. To understand trust and honesty and how this shapes them for the future.

Intention 2 – Develop our Sense of Others
Our curriculum offer will ensure that all pupils develop an understanding of caring and working collaboratively with others. Being able to be honest with others and trust in those around them, staff, pupils, professionals, parents and carers. Recognising and valuing other's individual needs, recognising that "Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid" (Albert Einstein).

Intention 3 – Develop our Sense of the World
Our curriculum offer will ensure that it provides opportunities to support our pupils in becoming responsible British and Global citizens. A responsible citizen has knowledge about their role in the community, state and the world and understands they have a role in making the world a better place to live through implementing the Aurora Values into their everyday lives and the world.

Implementation
The underlying principle of our curriculum implementation is flexibility, we have a curriculum which is designed to meet the needs, interests, aspiration and aptitudes of our pupils. Our curriculum model ensures that we have flexibility to fit in with our pupils rather than our pupils fitting in with our model. Our conceptualised curriculum draws on best practice and delivery from a number of different models and approaches, including a broad range of qualifications that meet the needs of our students and their attainment levels. We recognise that as our school population develops, so must the way in which we approach planning, teaching, learning and assessment. Our curriculum map continues to change and evolve to meet the individual needs of our pupils each year.

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In order to provide pupils across the school with experiences that are relevant, interesting and challenging, and to identify opportunities for progression, we have adopted a curriculum structure which encompasses a broad and balanced pathway; 'National Curriculum, Functional skills and GCSE Level qualifications.' This offer means we can make subtle distinctions between not only groups of learners but also the degree of curriculum formalisation they will experience in either building the prerequisites for, or working within, a more 'conventional' National Curriculum type approach.

The levels are not defined by age, but by need and achievement; pupils are therefore able to move flexibly from one pathway to the next at any point during their school career. Each pathway covers skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of areas of learning, and they are blended together, so as to facilitate a 'learning flow' between the two.

Because of the personalised approach to the curriculum, we are able to meet the needs of all our learners. All pupils across the school focus on targets based on the outcomes in their Educational Health Care Plan and Personal Learning Plan. Some pupils receive additional funding e.g. Pupil Premium and the impact of any interventions funded through these is monitored to ensure that they support progress.

At Aurora Cedars School, we endeavour to give young people a Key Stage appropriate curriculum which is as close to that received in mainstream as possible.

In Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 pupils will follow programmes of study which deliver the skills and knowledge identified in the National Curriculum. The curriculum will embrace all areas of academic learning at a level that is related to individual educational needs and provides suitable levels of challenge. Opportunities to develop pupil's personal, social and health awareness and understanding will be embedded across all curriculum areas and delivered extensively through our personal development programmes and PSHE programme, including Active Citizens (lower school) Active Citizens King's Trust (upper school), Pathways, Mindworks and THRIVE.

Our nurture groups offer a further adapted curriculum in line with students sensory and clinical needs that may impact their ability to access the full academic curriculum. For our nurture groups, teaching staff offer a range of opportunities to develop life skills through continuous provision, regulation stations and focus sessions on sensory regulation and how this can support them in the future. Without the nurture group the academic focus is on core subjects, with functional Maths and English playing a key role. The groups are heavily supported by the clinical team to help develop their individual skills and therefore opportunities to be better prepared for adulthood.

Studies in key stage 4 and our extended KS4 offer for those students age 16+, support pupils to attain a range of relevant qualifications so that they can and do progress to the next stage of their education or pathway. For some, this may be onto courses that lead to higher-level qualifications and into employment or apprenticeship. Aurora will provide opportunities for young people to stay within an educational setting post 16 which supports and meets their educational, emotional and mental health needs, where they can continue to sit Functional Skills or GCSE qualification and other related qualifications. Through our continued personal development programmes we support our young people to help gain independence and life skills where appropriate. We will support young people through individual pathways to enable them successfully to navigate to the next stage of their education or employment.

Qualifications offered meet a range of abilities in a variety of subject areas. The school has a strong belief in the value of Entry Level, and vocational educational programmes and provides access to suitable courses and accreditation. Pathways and Active Citizens programme can include opportunities for pupils to attend college and work placements, with support from staff.

The school is regularly visited by outside speakers and we arrange educational and careers visits to give pupils the opportunity to access learning through members of the community and experience learning through a wide range of sources. Integral to our curriculum is a wide range of educational experiences that extend beyond the classroom as part of our Active Citizens programme. Trips and visits extend the

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range of environments in which pupils learn and broaden their experiences of the wider world, enabling pupils to apply skills and learning to real-life contexts.

Our Active Citizens curriculum includes adventurous activities that enable pupils to enjoy taking part in physical and social tasks, in a range of environments and locations which are free from the constraints of a classroom. Pupils have opportunities to develop social skills, self-confidence, tolerance, and team working skills whilst developing positive attitudes to health and fitness.

The school provides Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) through their PSHE lessons. Pupils are encouraged and guided by moral principles, including healthy relationships and consent and taught to recognise the value of family life. The role of RSE is to explore, understand and challenge conventional notions of masculinity and femininity, describing sexuality in a positive sense. It provides pupils with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to feel happy and supported in their own sexual identity, and to respect others' sexual identity. Those involved in the delivery of RSE will be committed to securing a safe environment which encourages open discussion of both the positives and dangers of sexual activity. The biological aspects of human reproduction are delivered through the science curriculum. We recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the school's program of Relationships and Sex Education, other than those elements which are required by the Science National Curriculum. We recognise that many of our young people are highly vulnerable. We teach our pupils to keep themselves safe and have a focus each year for every age group on consent and appropriate and inappropriate touch, and how to report any concerns.

SMSC and PSHE are central to all aspects of our curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to respect the law and to act consistently with their own beliefs and with a view to the consequences of their own and others' actions. We enthusiastically promote 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 in a number of courses and are presented in a balanced manner. The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the School is not allowed.

Religious Education is delivered through the Humanities curriculum and also referenced within other subjects as and when it is relevant. The RE curriculum incorporates learning about other religions so pupils have a broader understanding of the diverse world that they are living in.

Key Stage 1&2	
Core Subjects	**Additional Subjects**
English Mathematics Science Humanities (History, Geography, RE) Design Technology including Art Physical Education PSHE Computing Food and Nutrition	THRIVE Active Citizens Music (student voice) Forest School
Key Stage 3	
Core Subjects	**Additional Subjects**
English	THRIVE

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Mathematics Science Humanities (History, Geography, RE) Food and Nutrition Design Technology including Art Physical Education PSHE Pathways (Careers) Computing	Active Citizens Active Citizens King's Music (student voice) MindWorks Forest School

Key Stage 4		
Core Subjects	**Additional subjects**	**Optional Subjects**
English Maths Science Digital Skills Pathways	THRIVE PSHE Active Citizens King's Trust MindWorks AQA Awards The Arts Award Forest School	Food* Religious Education* Art and Design and Craft * BTEC Sport* ICT/Digital Skills Child Development* Performing Arts* English Literature*

*options available with viable number of students and the expertise of teaching staff. Options are subject to change depending on staff expertise and cohort needs

Impact and Intended outcomes

By implementing a differentiated and modified national curriculum and through a broad range of qualification levels, it is intended that Aurora Cedars School will:

- Allow all pupils to make progress from their individual starting points.
- Optimise the communication skills of all pupils.
- Cater for the specific needs and learning difficulties of individual pupils as described in their EHCPs, by providing teaching and learning opportunities at an appropriate level.
- Engage pupils' interests in personal development and encourage learning
- Create a positive learning environment where pupils can work safely.
- Allow pupils to interact and learn from each other.
- Allow all pupils to reach their full potential and achieve their own personal success.
- Give pupils opportunities to develop their key skills.
- Prepare our learners for their next stage in education, employment and life
- Promote independent choices around learning and independent study through AQA Awards

We should see the impact of our 3 learning intentions in the following way:

Intention 1 – A Sense of Self

Pupils have a positive self-image, high well-being and engagement and are able to relate well to members of the school community. They take pride in themselves, their learning and the school environment. Pupils demonstrate incremental progress in their subject knowledge, skills and understanding. They are able to retain and apply this over time and in different contexts. Pupils require reduced levels of support to access their leaning and their fluency and accuracy is improved.

Intention 2 – A sense of others

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Pupils are active participants in their learning and are keen to work with others. They understand equity and are able to accept and promote inclusion, championing our school values of caring, collaboration and trust when interacting with others.

Intention 3 – A sense of our world
Pupils are engaged in their learning in all aspects of the curriculum and talk with enthusiasm about experiences they have taken part in. They access their learning in a variety of environments and are able to apply their knowledge and skills accordingly. Pupils are ready to transition to their next stage of learning/ independence as a responsible citizen, taking with them the Aurora Values.

6.1 Curriculum Transition

All young people at Aurora Cedars School are given full access to a broad and extensive curriculum based on their key stage, individual needs and abilities.

During the admission and initial assessment period, the most appropriate class setting is identified for the young person. This is based on consultation documents, baseline assessments, risk assessments and the Personalised Leaning Plan. If pupils need to change classes after this period, a decision would be made through discussions between the SENCO, teachers , parents/carers and the Head Teacher as part of the continual transition review process.

The school prides itself on providing effective and vital support for pupils as they make transitions through the various stages in their education. We carefully manage the transition of our pupils throughout the school and also in preparing pupils for further education. Detailed assessment and planning allow the full team of professionals to ensure that all support is cohesive and leads to the fulfilment of each individual's targets. Pupils and their parents/guardian/carers are provided with advice about the transition process and included in discussion prior to decisions being made about next steps. Part of the preparation for transitioning into adulthood will include support with travel training and transitioning into buildings and organisations that house a larger number of young people as well as accessing opportunities (including work experience) within the community.

7. Support, Advice and Communication

For further advice or guidance related to this policy please contact the Deputy Head Teacher.

8. Examinations

A separate examinations policy and exams access arrangements policy are available.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher and SLT members..

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