



## Curriculum Policy 2023

### School Context:

- The majority of students who attend Hope Tree School have a primary diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). Other students may be awaiting a formal diagnosis.
- A significant proportion of students have not attended school for a period of time resulting in gaps in their knowledge and learning skills.
- The majority of students have experienced significant levels of anxiety whilst trying to attend their mainstream settings, many having developed unhelpful coping strategies that have resulted in additional difficulties.
- Many students present with additional mental health difficulties, particularly PTSD.
- The majority of students have attended more than one school previously.

### The school environment aims to:

- Provide a calm and quiet place to learn.
- Take account of the sensory needs of the students.
- Deliver the curriculum in a way that promotes access to learning and the development of key skills.
- Provide students with embedded and direct access to therapeutic support as needed by each individual.
- Maintain small class sizes for all students.
- Deliver a broad and balanced curriculum (with bespoke elements when required), using curriculum objectives taken from the National Curriculum.

### The curriculum policy:

- Provides the framework for effective teaching and learning at the school.
- Provides the framework for the monitoring of students progress.
- Provides information about the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Provides information regarding long, medium and short term objectives for students.
- Includes information regarding activities and resources that will be used to deliver the curriculum.

## **Roles and responsibilities:**

### **The Head of Learning will ensure that:**

- All statutory elements of the curriculum 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 the delivery of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed regularly.
- The procedures for assessment are appropriate and meet the needs of the students.
- Parents are provided with termly updates to show how much progress students are making.
- Students' progress is monitored.
- There is oversight of curriculum structure and delivery.
- Schemes of work are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis
- Student progression data is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that any necessary changes for individuals or groups can be carried out in a timely manner.
- Long term planning is in place for all learning.
- Continued professional development needs are met.

### **Teaching Staff/Support staff will:**

- Ensure that the curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- Have a secure and comprehensive knowledge of the curriculum objectives in a range of year groups.
- Contribute to, and be able to interpret, progress data for each student and make changes to curriculum access where needed.
- Participate in high quality professional development.

### **Students will:**

- Be partners in their learning.
- Have their individual needs met using a holistic approach embedded in the curriculum, as well as targeted therapeutic intervention as required.

### **Parent/carers will:**

- Be kept informed about their children's learning, their progress, and any support they can give outside of school.
- Be confident that their child is receiving a high quality education that is designed to meet their educational needs, their social and emotional needs and will equip them with the skills they need to be independent and thrive in the long term.
- Be informed about the curriculum on offer and understand the rationale behind it.
- Have regular opportunities to speak with school staff about their child.

## **Curriculum Intent:**

- The curriculum intends to inspire and appropriately challenge all students and prepare them to take their place in society as adults.
- Students will have opportunities to develop their independence, confidence and mature into responsible citizens of the future.
- The school's aim is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that builds on previous learning and experiences.
- Building trusting relationships is a critical component to achieving successful delivery of the curriculum.
- The school recognises that many students have often experienced trauma as a result of previous negative school experiences. Where the need has been identified the school operates a trauma-informed approach to curriculum content delivery.
- Where a trauma informed approach is being used to deliver curriculum content, this will often mean a deviation from original schemes of work or lesson plans. Occasionally this is done at the time - during a lesson.
- Where a deviation from intended lesson plans has taken place, staff will seek to provide alternatives, understand the source of trauma trigger, discuss with the Head of Pastoral Care and develop a plan to re-introduce curriculum content as soon as the student is able, without the risk of re-traumatising any individual.
- By using a trauma-informed approach we empower students to make choices about their learning and facilitate participation in school activities. This can include swapping an activity which is known to trigger trauma response, providing alternative activities for students who don't feel ready to participate and making accommodations for students with different needs.
- Curriculum delivery will be flexible and include the use of continuous provision, small group adult led learning, personalised challenges, visitors, events and trips.
- The wider curriculum will facilitate the development of social skills, life skills and sound foundations for long term wellbeing and stable mental health.

## **The curriculum will:**

- Ensure students have opportunities to achieve their potential.
- Encourage students to enjoy learning and celebrate progress by providing opportunities for students to learn and make progress.
- Ensure all students have opportunities to develop speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.
- Ensure that all curriculum activities are accessible to all students.
- Allow for gaps in students' existing skills and knowledge to be identified and addressed.
- Where appropriate, prepare students for external examinations as part of our bespoke model curriculum with opportunities for learning beyond the classroom.
- Identify and nurture the strengths and interests of each student.
- To foster the curiosity, creativity and individuality of each student.
- Encourage trust and respect.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop skills for lifelong learning.

- Provide impartial Careers Guidance from Year 7 onwards, offering a broad range of opportunities to explore, develop knowledge and understanding of working life.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop healthy self esteem, positive self regard and genuine self worth.
- Provide opportunities to develop kindness and consideration of others.
- Encourage students to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- Help students to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies to develop a set of values which are consistent with British Values.
- Encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Develop high quality functional skills including key literacy, numeracy, science and ICT skills.

Develop high quality life skills, e.g. working with others and making a positive contribution to society.

## **Curriculum Implementation:**

### **Curriculum Plans:**

#### **Long term:**

- Schemes of work ensure that there is breadth and balance of coverage within subject areas. These are devised and monitored to ensure the curriculum is motivating, engaging and relevant to students' learning.
- Long term plans are reviewed every year alongside the curriculum policy.

#### **Medium term:**

- Medium term plans provide the sequence each term's objectives will be delivered in.
- Trips, visits and events will be specified.
- Timetables are devised and individualised.
- Medium term plans will be updated regularly to reflect the current cohort and their needs and interests.

#### **Short term:**

- Teachers will plan the provision of the week's objectives based on the needs of the children in the class, including activities and resources.
- Short term planning identifies differentiated high quality teaching and learning experiences that meet individual needs and, where needed, uses a trauma informed approach.
- Evaluation of each learning session will record evidence of progress, engagement, and objectives achieved.

### **Continuous Provision:**

- All students in Key Stage 2 will have the opportunity to engage in play-based, child led provision scheduled for parts of the school day.
- Learning during continuous provision will be opportunistic and inspired by each individual child's interests and thought processes.
- These opportunities will enable students to engage in learning activities which are designed to be low demand.
- Students will have ample opportunity for both indoor and outdoor learning activities.
- As children gain confidence in their learning and are able to master key learning skills it is likely that they will be able to access more formal styles of learning as they progress through the school.
- Students in Key Stage 3 will continue to have opportunities for less formal learning through the use of cross curricular project-based topic work.
- By Key Stage 4 we aim to ensure that the majority of students will have developed their learning skills to a point where they are able to access a more formal curriculum.

### **Small Group adult-led learning:**

- Some learning objectives will be taught, and some consolidated, during small group learning led by a teacher.
- Social skills, speaking and listening and teamwork objectives will also be facilitated during these sessions.

### **Visitors/Trips/Events**

- Students will be exposed to a range of experiences and professions through talks and presentations by visitors to the school. Students can observe, or participate in, these while in a familiar environment.
- Trips (e.g. to a castle or museum) and events (e.g. school fete, art gallery) will be planned to support learning and provide experiences for students. Events at the school will aim to involve parents and families of students.
- Visits, trips and events will be linked to the current curriculum theme or will be life skills or experiences the students will benefit from.

### **The Hidden Curriculum:**

The Hidden Curriculum refers to all non-taught experiences that students have when they are at school. These occur at less structured times such as break and lunch times and in the informal encounters and interactions that students have as they move through the school. In between all lessons students have fifteen minutes when they can choose an activity, which can be independent or communal, and will include at least a brief time outside. A number of curriculum objectives will also be covered during regular routines, e.g. organic matter can be discussed while emptying lunch scraps into the garden compost.

In addition, during less formal times:

- Staff are able to model appropriate social behaviours, language and interactions and demonstrate how positive engagement takes place.
- Staff are able to model how differences are respected and how to promote empathy, acceptance and understanding.
- Students can practise the skills they have been taught in more structured times and learn what works well and what works less well.
- Students have opportunities to learn to take responsibility for their actions and words and to accept the consequences, both good and bad that are seen to flow from their choices.
- Students learn that even when others are behaving in a way that is unfamiliar, unpredictable or that is raising their anxiety levels, that adults around them will ensure they are kept safe.

## **Curriculum Impact:**

The curriculum will:

- Provide the foundation to enable students to take qualifications in Key Stage 4 and beyond.
- Fulfil statutory requirements.
- Meet the needs of students of all abilities at the school.
- Ensure continuity and progression within the school and between phases of education.
- Ensure curriculum delivery matches the needs of the students.
- Ensure that the curriculum is underpinned by the school's specialist knowledge of autism.
- Use a trauma-informed approach when necessary to ensure that students' mental health is not further negatively impacted.

## **Monitoring, evaluation and review:**

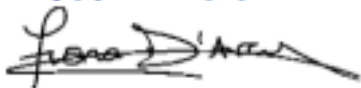
### **The Head of Learning will:**

- Receive regular updates from staff with regard to each student's progress across the curriculum.
- Provide regular updates on progress to the termly board meetings as part of the ongoing review process.
- Provide a termly written report to parents and carers regarding progress of each student.
- Review the curriculum and curriculum delivery within the annual review of the school development plan.

Signed:



Head of Learning



Head of Pastoral Care

Date: April 2023

Review Date: April 2024