



Curriculum Policy 2025

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.
- Facilitate 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.

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 Hope Tree School's curriculum structure
- Outlines how Hope Tree School delivers a broad and balanced curriculum, balancing the requirements of the National Curriculum with the needs of the individual students.
- Includes information regarding activities and resources that will be used to deliver the curriculum.

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, taking into account the likelihood of gaps in students' learning.
- 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 - i.e. 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 strategy 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.
- As per the Teaching and Learning policy, 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.
- Be 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.
- Provide opportunities for learning beyond the classroom.
- Identify and nurture the strengths and interests of each student.
- 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.
- Prepare students for the future by developing high quality life skills, e.g. working with others and making a positive contribution to society.

Curriculum Implementation:

Hope Tree School's Curriculum Structure

- A curriculum overview is designed to align with the National Curriculum.
- An expanded version of the curriculum overview is designed to identify the knowledge and skills to be delivered within each unit of work.
- Student-facing resources (for example, slideshows and task sheets) are used to deliver the learning to students in an accessible format for the class. These may need adapting for specific students.
- Tracking spreadsheets are used to record the achievement and engagement of each student alongside the specific objectives delivered in each lesson.
- All elements of the curriculum will be updated regularly to reflect the current cohort, their needs, and their interests. A trauma-informed approach will be applied.

Curriculum Overview:

- The curriculum overview ensures that there is breadth and balance of coverage within subject areas. This is developed to ensure the curriculum is comprehensive and engaging.
- The curriculum overview is reviewed every year.
- The curriculum overview sequences the units of work.

Curriculum - Knowledge and Skills:

- This expanded curriculum document lists the knowledge and skills to be delivered within each unit of work.
- This document identifies what we want students to know in each subject and ensures that students' knowledge builds progressively.
- Trips, visits and events will be designed to supplement the knowledge and skills being delivered in lessons.

Student-Facing Resources:

- Teachers will plan lessons that deliver the knowledge and skills outlined in each unit of work.
- Knowledge and skills will be broken down into smaller steps, depending on the needs of the students in the class.
- Where gaps in knowledge are identified, teachers may use their subject knowledge and professional judgement to address that gap in the moment. This may require further planning and consultation with other subject teachers.
- Where students show a strength or an interest in a particular aspect of the curriculum, teachers will ensure the students are secure in applying their knowledge and skills in different contexts. In addition, students may have the opportunity to further explore this interest, with teachers using their subject knowledge and professional judgement to facilitate this.
- In discussion with the Head of Learning, teachers can use high-quality resources from a range of educational material providers, or develop their own when required.
- Student-facing resources may be differentiated, and, where needed, a trauma-informed approach will be applied.

Tracking Spreadsheets:

- An evaluation of each learning session will record evidence of progress, engagement, and objectives achieved.
- See the Assessment and Review policy for further information.

Continuous Provision:

- All students within Key Stage 2 will have opportunities to engage in play-based, child led provision which may be scheduled as part of their day to day provision.
- 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 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, taking short breaks between lessons to enable processing of information.

Transitions and Key Stage Readiness:

- As a school providing Key Stages 2, 3, and 4, we will consider the readiness of each cohort and student when approaching the beginning and end of each Key Stage.
- Where the Year 7 cohort are not yet ready for the transition to a Key Stage 3 structure, consideration will be given to what they can manage. Appropriate strategies will be implemented to continue progress based on individual needs. For example, in the 24/25 academic year, the Year 7 students will continue to be taught by one main teacher, with supplementary teaching from specialist teachers to introduce the cohort to the Key Stage 3 structure.
- During Key Stage 3, it may become clear that pursuing GCSE qualifications may not be suitable for some students. In this instance, in consultation with the student and their parents, an alternative qualification pathway will be identified.
- The suitability of the qualifications to be delivered at Key Stage 4 will be considered for each student, their individual needs, prior academic attainment, and their aspirations for the future. For example, in the 24/25 academic year, we have two Year 9 classes. The students have been placed into the classes based on their requirement for a different pace of teaching, in addition to an emphasis on core subjects, and priority given to vocational life skills.
- New students may be welcomed throughout the academic year, and as outlined in the 'School Context' section (see page 1), students arrive with varying prior experiences. This often means they have missed considerable learning and may be displaying an inconsistent learning profile, as well as difficulty engaging in some aspects of the curriculum due to anxiety. In these situations, in consultation with the student and their parents, a transition strategy will be developed and lessons and activities will be adapted to incorporate their needs whilst they are beginning to access the curriculum.

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 Wider Curriculum:

The Wider 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 a short break, e.g. 10 minutes when they can choose an activity, which can be independent or communal, and can 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.

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.
- A curriculum overview is in place for all subjects.
- Continued professional development needs are met.
- They 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.
- Review the curriculum and curriculum delivery within the annual review of the school development plan.

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 Impact:

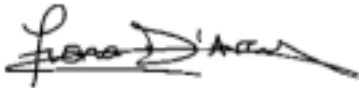
The curriculum will:

- 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.
- Provide the foundation to enable students to take qualifications in Key Stage 4 and beyond.
- 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 aligns with the differing individual needs students.

Signed:



Head of Learning



Head of Pastoral Care

Date: October 2025

Review Date: October 2026