

# CURRICULUM POLICY



<b>Author:</b>	Gareth Davis
<b>School Role:</b>	Deputy Head of School
<b>Date:</b>	13.09.23

<b>Reviewer:</b>	Adam Medlock
<b>School Role:</b>	Head of School
<b>Date:</b>	27.09.23

<b>Next review date:</b>	Spring Term 2024
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## 1. Purpose; Aims and Ethos

The purpose of this document is to explain how we structure our curriculum and planning, and the rationale behind our approach.

At Stafford Hall School, we encourage all students to work hard and reach their full potential, by providing them with a challenging curriculum that allows them to stretch themselves. We align our ethos with that of **UNICEF's rights of the Child** which states: "Every child has the right to an education – whatever their background, gender or ethnicity."

We also develop our curriculum in-line with the ethos set out in the **Autism Education Trust Framework** which has eight areas of focus:

1. Communication and Interaction
2. Social understanding and relationships
3. Sensory processing
4. Interests, routines and processing
5. Emotional understanding and self-awareness
6. Learning and engagement
7. Healthy living
8. Independence and community participation

Based on these ideals, we offer a broad and balanced curriculum, individually tailored to meet the needs of our students. Our curriculum is ambitious and does not aim to cap the potential of our students, but rather help them realise it.

Where possible, our curriculum follows the guidelines of the National Curriculum, and we will strive to ensure that the young person works at or towards their appropriate Key Stage. The curriculum has been expanded to deliver differentiated qualifications:

- **Mathematics NCFE: Entry Level, Functional Skills Level 1/2**
- **English NCFE: Entry Level, Functional Skills Level 1/2**
- **Science AQA: Entry Level 1/2/3 with the option of Single or Double awards.**
- **Expressive arts (Art and Music) AQA: Entry Level 1/2/3**
- **Humanities (Non-assessed)**
- **Personal Development and Life Skills AQA: Entry Level 1/2/3**

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- **Computing**
- **RE: Following believing and belonging in West Yorkshire**
- **Duke of Edinburgh: Bronze award**
- **Sport and Fitness: opportunities to develop attributes such as resilience, confidence, commitment, drive, self-awareness, empathy, team working and problem-solving through an enrichment programme of swimming, indoor trampolining, indoor climbing and tennis.**

The enrichment programme at Stafford Hall School has multiple aims: close the cultural gap that many of our students have, support and promote good and improving behaviour, encourage a healthy lifestyle and promote good social skills.

Not all pupils are currently accessing the national curriculum. Pupils in the nurture classes follow the EYFS curriculum, with the option to follow a pathway towards the national curriculum, dependent on progress.

Within Nurture pupils follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework to support our students to achieve outcomes of staying safe: enjoying good physical and mental health, living a healthy lifestyle, enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood, making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and achieving economic wellbeing: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

The framework is delivered using a mixture of child-initiated play and adult led activities. When students start their learning journey within Nurture, we use the Development Matters outcomes to baseline each student. This enables us to plan for developing a student's learning and outcomes they have already achieved. At the end of each half term students will be assessed that term allowing teachers to see progress that has been made or if an outcome still needs supporting. Active learning takes place because play is purposeful, and students are engaged. We believe in 'personalised learning' whereby we plan for students as individuals ensuring activities are geared to their interests, style of learning and level of development.

There are seven areas of learning and development within the framework that shape educational programmes in Nurture. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. These three areas are called the **Prime Areas** and are: **Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development**. The other four areas are called the **Specific Areas** and are: **Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design**. All the areas must be delivered through planned purposeful play, with a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities.

## **Seven Areas of Learning:**

**Linguistic:** This area is concerned with developing students' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. All students study English as a First or Second Language (as appropriate to their situation).

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**Mathematical:** This area helps pupils to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space, and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematics is being developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion in mathematics, science, the Humanities and through application of mathematical skills in others areas, such as PE and the Arts.

**Scientific:** This area is concerned with increasing students' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and developing the skills associated with science as a process of enquiry: for example, observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings.

**Technical:** This area seeks to develop, planning and communicating ideas; working with tools, equipment, materials and components to produce good quality products; and evaluating processes and products. This is achieved by the provision of Art and Design and Technology, as well as through STEM activities.

**Human and social:** This area is concerned with people and their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. These keys skills and experiences are provided for in History, Geography, Religious Studies and various sections of the Science curriculum. PD and assemblies add to the opportunities for students to experience this aspect of learning.

**Physical:** This area aims to develop physical control and co-ordination, as well as tactical skills and imaginative responses, and to help student's evaluate and improve their performance. Student's should also acquire knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health. All students have time in the week for formal PE lessons, during enrichment activities and Feel Good Friday. Aspects of health and fitness also form part of the science curriculum. Lessons in mindfulness add to this experience.

**Aesthetic and creative:** This area is concerned with the processes of making, composing and inventing. There are aesthetic and creative aspects in all subjects, but some make a particularly strong contribution, including Art, Design and Technology, Computing, Music, and the study of literature and drama, because they call for personal, imaginative, and often practical, responses. Students have access to all these areas of endeavour both within the main curriculum and as extra-curricular activities. Through all these activities and experiences all students, irrespective of their SEND needs, whether they have a EHC plan or are using English as an additional language, will acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills in all phases of their education at Stafford Hall School.

As well as the seven areas of learning, Stafford Hall School aims to provide education that will encourage **British Values** and also prepare our learners for life after education, with our curriculum aligning with the **Gatsby Benchmarks of good career guidance**.

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## **British Values:**

It is paramount to a successful education, that young people, not only develop and consolidate key skills, but that they also withhold British Values, and become well respected citizens in society, who lead fulfilling lives, with purpose and ambition. The British Values which are central to this curriculum include: democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; tolerance; and respect.

This curriculum will ensure that the following protected characteristics are promoted and not discriminated against: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

## **Gatsby Benchmarks of good career guidance:**

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

## **2. Intent**

The intention of the curriculum at Stafford Hall School is to prepare students to take part in the development of tomorrow's rapidly changing world. Creative thinking encourages students to make positive changes to their quality of life. The curriculum at Stafford Hall School encourages students to become autonomous and creative problem-solvers, both as individuals and as part of a team. It enables them to develop and articulate their own views based on British values, comprehend, and critically evaluate the views of others. Literacy and numeracy are crucial for equipping pupils with life-long skills for effective social interactions and future employability. It is therefore essential, that in addition to specific English and Mathematic lessons, literacy and numeracy skills are embedded throughout the curriculum.

## **3. Implementation:**

Stafford Hall School uses a variety of teaching and learning styles in lessons. The principal aim is to develop student's knowledge, skills and understanding of the world around them. Teachers ensure that the students apply their knowledge and understanding when articulating a vision or solving a problem. We do this through a mixture of whole class teaching and individual or group activities.

Before planning our bespoke curriculum around our students, we first use diagnostic assessment tools to be able to accurately baseline ability levels, particularly in maths and English. To do this, we use two specific online software packages; **BKSB** and **Accelerated Reader**. These are able to determine whether students are working at pre-entry, entry level one, two and above and also calculate a current reading age so as best to enable our students to receive optimal support in their learning.

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This baseline assessment is a continual aspect of our pupils' development, and these assessments are conducted at the start of every term, and in the final weeks of the second summer half-term in order to accurately gauge progression and areas for improvement.

Within lessons, we give students the opportunity both to work on their own and to collaborate with others, listening to other student's feelings, thoughts, and ideas, and treating these with respect. Students critically evaluate existing theory and develop their own. They have the opportunity to use a wide range of materials and resources, including IT.

In all classes, there are students of differing abilities. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all students by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the student – with the aim that every student must have their thinking stretched and challenged. We achieve this through a range of strategies:

- setting common tasks that are open-ended and can have a variety of results.
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty where not all children complete all tasks.
- providing a range of challenges through the revision of different resources.

We carry out the curriculum planning at Stafford Hall School in two phases: long-medium term, medium-short term.

The long-medium term plan maps out the units covered in each term during the key stage and across every academic year group. This allows all staff to see clearly how our scaffolded learning approach and the pathway for our students' development across several years.

Our medium-short term plans, which we have been adopted from the national scheme, give details of each unit of work for each half-term. They identify learning objectives and outcomes for each unit and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. Class teachers complete a plan for each week. These list the specific learning objectives and give details of how to teach the lessons. The class teacher keeps these plans, and the class teacher and SLT often discuss them on an informal basis. At the end of each week, teachers and associates should review the lesson plans from that week and annotate on any adaptations or comments on the students' achievements towards their learning objectives.

At the beginning of each medium-term plan, teachers will complete a synopsis of the learning for that half-term. There will also be links to each pupils EHCP and IEP, with SEND differentiation techniques for each pupil in that class. In the weekly section of the planning proforma, teachers will link the learning content and objectives to the Gatsby Benchmarks and where possible, British Values.

We plan the activities in art and technology so that they build on the prior learning of the children. We give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, and we also build planned progression into the scheme of work, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move through the school. Find below the adopted template that addresses the medium-short term plan:

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With regards to our daily timetable, students at Stafford Hall can expect a morning of curriculum-based activities such as maths, English, science, and personal development; with a humanities lesson delivered once a week. This is done on a carousel timetable with students moving to different classrooms and receiving teaching from subject specialists. The afternoon is set aside for enrichment activities that help with students' life skills and wellbeing. This consists of two activities completed on-site; one a bespoke life skills lesson, (which can vary anywhere from cooking, ironing, money skills, cv writing etc.) and one intervention afternoon which focuses on further improvement in maths and English. The other two afternoons are conducted off-site and include a wide range of physical activities and learning opportunities (for example, rock climbing, swimming, trampolining, horse-care.)

There is also opportunity for students to increase their knowledge and appreciation of cultural capital, with one off-site trip planned per half term to allow for a wide range of experiences and help pupils engage in a wider society. This also aligns with our implementation of the **'Believing and Belonging in West Yorkshire'** syllabus for religious education. This encourages:

- Pupils to develop a broad and balanced understanding of religions and worldviews.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Broaden perspectives of faiths and cultures, encouraging tolerance of diversity.
- Nurture spirituality
- Contribute to developing pupils as positive, participating citizens of the world.

#### 4. Impact:

Every child, whether in a mainstream or special education setting, deserves a meaningful education to ensure that they are able to fulfil their potential. Young People with an Education Health Care Plan or Statement of Educational Need, face significant barriers to their progress and achieve less well than their peers at school and in further education, they may also be more likely to be bullied or excluded than their peers.

At Stafford Hall School, we have high expectations for the children and young people and the skills provided by professionals to help them to learn. We will strive to ensure our young people are educated by professionals who understand their needs, without fear of being stigmatised by their peers and in an environment where disruptive behaviour is not accepted.

The staff team will play a key role in supporting the young people to ensure any identified issues, needs or support is given and followed through in line with their Individual Education Plan or EHC Plan. We aim to achieve positive outcomes by:

- Providing the opportunity for young people to build trusting relationships with a wide and varied range of positive role models.
- Offer a semi-rural therapeutic, psychologically informed environment where young people feel safe and secure and where emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs can be met.

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- Providing high quality care, placement and therapeutic plans for young people throughout their placement. Young people are encouraged and supported to have an active part in the process through consultation and ensuring their voice is heard.
- Supporting young people to enable them to understand their emotions and how these are linked to challenging and risky behaviour. In doing this, we can teach them new coping strategies and ways of behaving that will allow them to engage more fully and successfully in society.
- Promoting positive contact and helping build relationships and attachments between young people, family members and other significant people in their lives in accordance with their needs and wishes as reflected in their EHCP.
- Working in partnership with families, professionals and agencies and promote true multiagency and multi-disciplinary working to ensure a high standard of care.